Hafa Adai!

# Saipan Tribune

75¢

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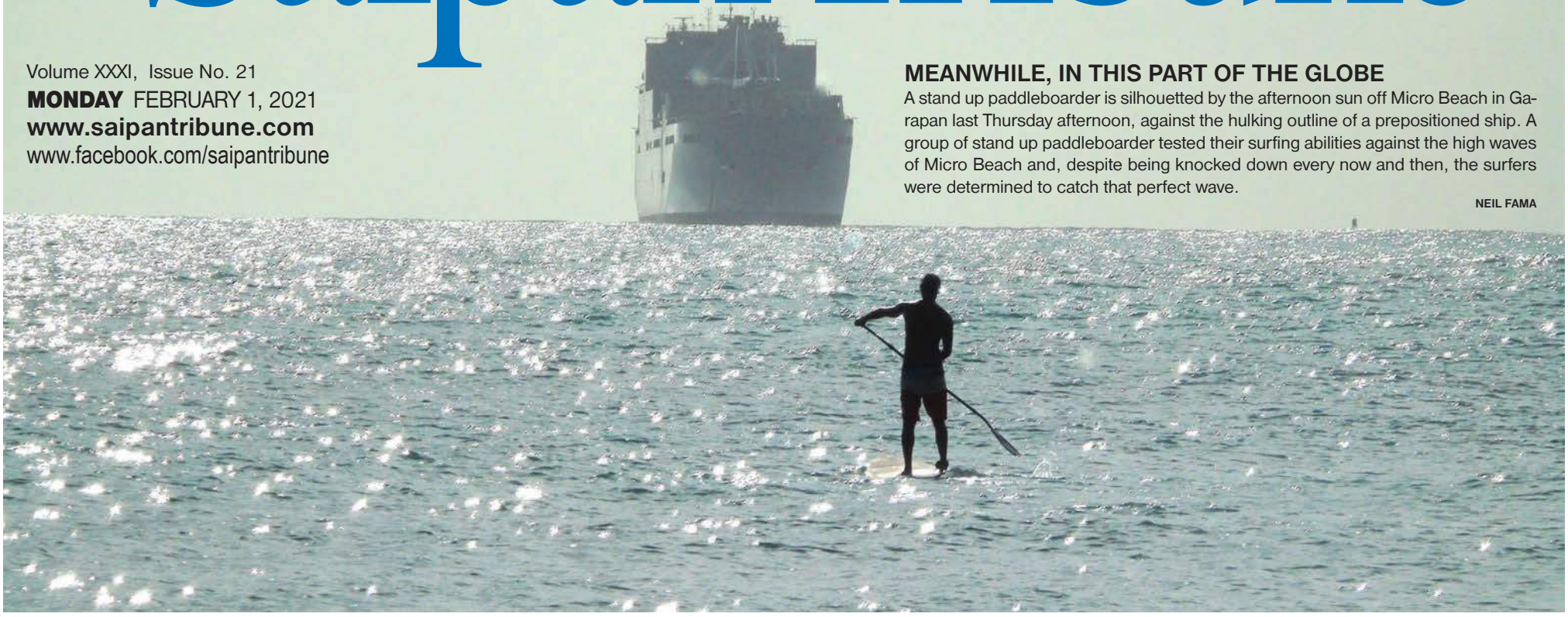
**CNMI FACT SHEET: 2nd stimulus checks. PAGE 2**
**Over 10% of CNMI population now vaccinated—CHCC. PAGE 5**



**MEANWHILE, IN THIS PART OF THE GLOBE**
A stand up paddleboarder is silhouetted by the afternoon sun off Micro Beach in Garapan last Thursday afternoon, against the hulking outline of a prepositioned ship. A group of stand up paddleboarder tested their surfing abilities against the high waves of Micro Beach and, despite being knocked down every now and then, the surfers were determined to catch that perfect wave.

NEIL FAMA

# Permanent status bill reintroduced

## » After 5 years, persons with Marianas permanent residence status could apply for US permanent residency

**FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) reintroduced Thursday legislation to grant permanent status to certain Commonwealth-only Transitional Workers and to foreign investors, who were originally admitted under Commonwealth immigration law.

**See STATUS on Page 4**

## Paper checks for 2nd stimulus on the way

**By FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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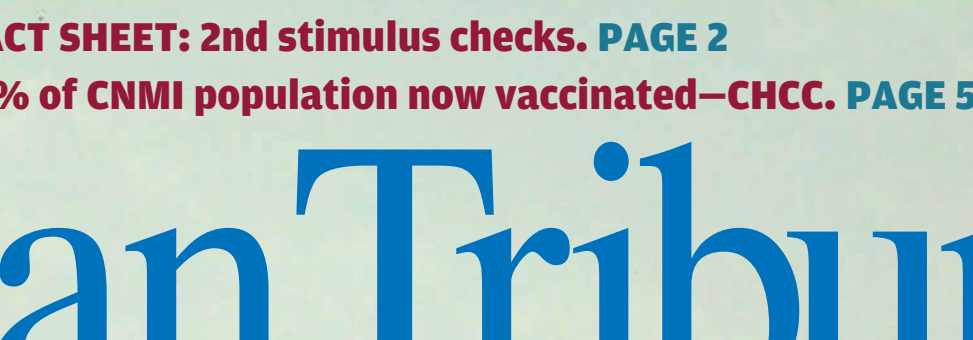
REPORTER

Bautista

With many who chose to receive their second stimulus payments via direct deposit already getting their money starting last week, the Department of Finance's Division of Revenue and Taxation has started sending the paper checks last Friday, according to press secretary Kevin Bautista yesterday.

In his update on the status of the release of the second

**See PAPER on Page 4**



## Esther Muña is SCC Business Person of the Year

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña, fourth from right, is presented with the 2020 Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Business Person of the Year award by, from left, Chamber executive director Maxine Laszlo and previous BPOY awardees Gloria Cavanagh, Dave M. Sablan Sr., Velma Palacios, Mike Sablan, Jerry Tan, Marcie Tomokano, and Vicky Benavente at the gala held last Saturday at the Saipan World Resort Royal Taga Hall in Susupe.

IVA MAURIN

**By IVA MAURIN**
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CORRESPONDENT

In a show of respect and gratitude from the business community, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce honored Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña as its Business Person of the Year at a gala

**See ESTHER on Page 4**

**IN THE CASE OF SEVEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS**

## IPI chair could faces new contempt charge

**By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

Cui Li Jie, who chairs Imperial Pacific International Holdings Limited, the parent company of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, is facing possible contempt charges again for allegedly evading and violating a subpoena in the case filed by seven construction workers.

According to memorandum filed by Aaron Halegua and Bruce Berline, who are the lawyers for the seven con-

**See IPI on Page 4**

## AT A GLANCE

As of 8pm, Jan 31, 2021

| GUAM | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 7,572 | 15 | 7,587 |
| Recovered | 7,353 | 2 | 7,355 |
| Active | 88 | 15 | 103 |
| Deaths | 129 | 0 | 129 |
| Cumulative Number of Persons Tested | | | 113,687 |

| SAIPAN | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 132 | 0 | 132 |
| Traced via Travel Screening | 106 | 0 | 106 |
| Traced via Community Screening | 26 | 0 | 26 |
| Deaths | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Cumulative Number of Persons Tested | | | 26,131* |
| Days since last community transmission | | | 165 |

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

## COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

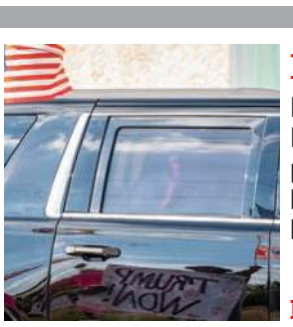
**LEGEND:**
**Red:** Least safe
**Orange**
**Yellow**
**Blue**
**Green:** Safest

*Source: Office of the Governor*

## INSIDE

**BUSINESS**
Bank of Guam has officially closed its Dededo and Harmon branches in Guam.

**PAGE 11**



**NATION**
Former President Donald Trump has parted ways with his lead impeachment lawyers.

**PAGE 12**

**WORLD**
Russian police have issued a strong warning against participating in protests planned for Sunday.

**PAGE 13**

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

# Local

## CNMI FACT SHEET: 2nd economic impact payments or 'stimulus checks'

**How much will you get?**

■ Individuals earning up to $75,000 will receive **$600.**

■ Couples earning up to $150,000 will receive **$1,200.**

■ For every child in the household, you will receive **$600**.

■ Eligible individuals don't need a minimum income for the payment. However, for higher income individuals, the payment amount is reduced by 5% of the amount that their adjusted gross income exceeds the following thresholds:

■ $150,000 for taxpayers filing a joint return or filing a return as a qualifying widow or widower

■ $112,500 for taxpayers filing as head of household

■ $75,000 for all others

Qualifying widows and widowers whose AGI is more than $75,000 may not have received the full amount of their payments. Those individuals may claim the Recovery Rebate Credit on their 2020 return. Please refer to the instructions for the 2020 Form 1040CM for more information.

**Who are not eligible?**

■ Individuals who were claimed as a dependent on another taxpayer's 2019 tax return (for example, a child or student who may be claimed on a parent's tax return or a dependent parent who may be claimed on an adult child's tax return).

■ Individuals that do not have an SSN that is valid for employment issued before the due date of your 2019 tax return (including any extensions).

■ Individuals deceased before 2020.

■ Estates or trusts

However, you may be eligible to claim a Recovery Rebate Credit on Line 30 of your 2020 tax return. Refer to the instructions for the 2020 Form 1040 for more information.

**How will the money be sent?**

■ Stimulus checks will be issued via direct deposit or by check and mailed to the address indicated on the return, or last known address. People can opt for direct deposit by registering through stimulus.dof.gov.mp.

**I have no reportable income for 2019. Ddo I qualify?**

■ Yes. You must file a 2019 income tax return and report zero income. You also must have a valid social security number and meet the CNMI residency requirements for tax purposes.

I›m a Social Security, Railroad Retirement, or Veterans benefit recipient, do I need to take any action? (added Jan.y 5, 2021)

■ No action is necessary for you to receive the second payment. Your payment will be issued based on information the IRS has on file for your 2019 tax return, or information provided by a federal agency that issued benefits to you (Social Security Administration, Veterans Affairs, or Railroad Retirement Board). If you don't get a payment and you are eligible to receive one, you may be able to claim it on your 2020 tax return as the Recovery Rebate Credit.

**Will a deceased individual receive the payment?**

■ A payment won't be issued to someone who has died before Jan. 1, 2020. If you filed a joint return in 2019 and your spouse died before Jan. 1, 2020, you won't receive a $600 payment for your deceased spouse, but you'll still be issued up to $600 for you and $600 for any qualifying children, if all other eligibility criteria are met.

Regarding eligible individuals who died in 2020, the Recovery Rebate Credit may be claimed on line 30 of their 2020 tax return. Refer to the instructions for the 2020 Form 1040 for more information.

**Will my second Economic Impact Payment be offset if I owe a federal tax liability, have a payment agreement with the IRS, or owe other federal debts? (updated Jan. 19, 2021)**

■ No.

**Will my second Economic Impact Payment be offset if my spouse or I owe past-due child support? (updated Jan. 19, 2021)**

■ No.

**I submitted my bank information on my most recent tax return (2019) and also in the stimulus portal, which account information will used for my deposit?**

■ The most current bank information received by DRT will be used. Your bank information provided on the stimulus portal will override bank information from your tax return.

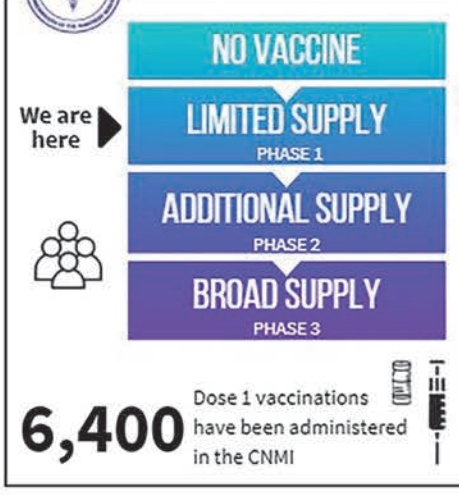
**What should I do if the amount I received is not as expected?**

■ If it is determined your actual benefit exceeds your payment received, DRT is able to process the remaining payment before March 21, 2021. You may also claim your remaining payment as a Recovery Rebate Credit on your 2020 income tax return.

**I›m not an American citizen. Do I qualify?**

Yes, as long as you're living and working in the U.S. with a valid Social Security number and valid work authorization. That includes green card holders, and it generally includes those on work visas, such as a CW, H-1B, or H-2A. ***(PR)***

## CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE:




**6,400** Dose 1 vaccinations have been administered in the CNMI

**PHASE 1a**
- Healthcare workers, high-risk first responders, homebound/bedbound patients, & Man Amko' (≥65 years).

**PHASE 1b EXPANDED TO INCLUDE**
- Persons 55 years of age and older.
- Workers part of CNMI infrastructure across public and private sectors: Media & Telecommunications, Food & Agriculture(Grocery store workers, Restaurant/Catering/Bakery workers, and Wholesalers), Transportation Systems, Commercial Facilities, Energy and Utilities, Financial Services, Waste & Water Systems, Education Staff, Faith-Based Leaders, Covid-19 Contractors employed by the CNMI Governor's Task Force, and CNMI (State/Local) Government Employees (All agencies).

How to register & get updates

- **Visit our website** www.vaccinatecnmi.com
- **Call the Vaccinate CNMI Call Center** (670) 682-SHOT (7468)

### CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULE

— 02/01/21 - 02/03/21

**SAIPAN**

Monday, 2/1
**TIME:** 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/11

Tuesday, 2/2
**TIME:** 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/12

Wednesday, 2/3
**TIME:** 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/13

Dose 1 vaccinations are limited per day. Go online to register at **vaccinatecnmi.com** or call the Vaccinate CNMI Call Center at **(670) 683-SHOT**/7468 to secure a vaccination spot.

*Phase 1b dose 1 vaccination depends upon verification of employment status by CHCC and daily capacity.*

**LOCATION:** CHCC - MCATS tents located across from the Emergency Room.

**PARKING:** Parking lot is located across the CHCC campus on Navy Hill Road.

**TINIAN**

Residents on Tinian from Phase 1a were vaccinated on January 17, 2021 with dose 1 of 2. A new vaccination schedule for Tinian is coming soon.

**ROTA**

Residents on Rota from Phase 1a were vaccinated on January 24, 2021 with dose 1 of 2. A new vaccination schedule for Rota is coming soon.

What to Bring

1. **Vaccination ID** (Located in confirmation email)
2. **Government Issued ID** (e.g, driver's license or passport)
3. **Employee ID** or latest paystub (Phase 1b only)
4. **Insurance Card** (If applicable)
5. DOSE 2 recipients must also bring their **Vaccination Record Card** (please make your appointment date even if you misplace your card)

VACCINATE CNMI CALL CENTER: **(670) 682-SHOT** / Mon-Sun 7am-10pm VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE REGISTRATION: vaccinatecnmi.com @cnmichcc

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Sen. Edith Deleon Guerrero (D-Saipan), second from left, and Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) check their phones during a recess of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation's first regular organization session at the House of Representatives' chamber. FERDIE DE LA TORRE

# Deleon Guerrero asks for list of all revenues for SNILD

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Sen. Edith Deleon Guerrero (D-Saipan) asked the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation last week for a list of all revenues intended for the delegation.

Speaking at the SNILD's first regular session at the House of Representatives chamber, Deleon Guerrero said she was doing some research on SNILD when came across a *Saipan Tribune* article dated Sept. 23, 2020, "Saipan, Tinian, Rota delegations owe $7.16 million to general fund."

The article was about Sen. Paul A. Manglona's statement (Ind-Rota) that the Department of Finance's detailed accounting of the casino annual license fee fund appropriated to Saipan, Tinian, and Rota showed that the three legislative delegations owe a total of $7.16 million to the general fund.

Manglona said this is so if Finance takes the position that Year 5 of the casino annual license fee funding—$11 million for Saipan and $2 million each for Rota and Tinian—was never allotted to the respective delegations, although Public Law 20-10 specifically appropriated the replenishment of the account from the Casino Gross Receipt Tax from fiscal years 2017 and 2018.

Deleon Guerrero said now that the SNILD is duly organized, her question is what is SNILD's liquidity to commit fund on SNILD legislation?

"What revenue sources [are] funding SNILD?" asked Deleon Guerrero as she requested for a list of all revenue sources for SNILD. "Currently, are we working with paper revenue or real liquidity, cash in a bank of funds for SNILD?"

She said she is sure all the other SNILD members will appreciate this report.

Without naming who she is alluding to, Deleon Guerrero added that the 100% reprogramming authority is a reality that needs to be dealt with "if we are to move forward with what is best for the CNMI and its people."

Newly elected SNILD chair Sen. Vinnie F. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) told Deleon Guerrero that her message and concerns are "duly noted."

Sablan said as soon as he appoints the chairs of the SNILD committees, he will ensure that those questions will be answered and send to her office.

# Senate committee wants to hear from Labor on PUA

The newly appointed chairman of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law and Federal Relations wants to hear about the status of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance in the CNMI from the CNMI Department of Labor.

Sen. Karl King-Nabors (R-Tinian) notified committee members last Friday about a meeting with Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente this Wednesday at 1:30pm at the Senate chamber.

The senator said they want to also hear from Benavente regarding the status of the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation and unemployment insurance benefits.

Written comments on agenda items may be submitted to King-Nabors' office prior to the meeting.

"Oral testimony may be presented during the committee meeting," he said.

Sen. Edith E. Deleon Guerrero (D-Saipan) stated during the inauguration of the 22nd Legislature last Jan. 11 that, as of the Dec. 16, 2020, the CNMI has $6.69 million in PUA and FPUC funds available for disbursement, and that these funds are supposed to be disbursed on a weekly basis.

Deleon Guerrero, who is a former Labor secretary, said thousands of individuals are still waiting for their weekly PUA and PFUC benefits. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

# Jones is new SHRM president

The Society for Human Resource Management-NMI Chapter has sworn in a new batch of board members for 2021 headed by newly appointed president Penelope Jones.

Jones, who is with Hyatt Regency Saipan, says the main focus this year is the chapter's membership and generating public interest. "We want to focus on our members and non-members, and try to come up with ideas and topics that would be more of interest [to] the public as well," she said. "Based on the survey we have, there is so much about [COVID-19 and] coming back to the workplace, but what we need to be cautious of are the employees and employees' rights."

Josephine Mesta, director of Human Resource of Hyatt Regency Saipan, administered the oath of office to its 2021 board members.

Aside from Jones, the other new SHRM members are vice president Jacklyn Michelle Atalig from Docomo Pacific; secretary Nicole Babauta from the CNMI Department from Commerce and Northern Marianas College; treasurer Denise Montenegro from Hyatt Regency Saipan; membership director Angelo Rabe from Kanoa Resort Saipan; marketing director Roman Tudela from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.; programs director Vanessa Deleon Guerrero also from CHCC; legislative director Catherine Cachero from Marianas Legal Strategy Group LLC; certification director Frank Gibson from HR Support CNMI; chapter advisers Francisco Ada from Triple J Saipan Inc. and Shirley Dotts from IT&E; and past president Proserpina Magofna from Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

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# NAP increases eligibility and benefit levels

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The Nutrition Assistance Program has been approved to increase its income eligibility standards and the maximum monthly benefit allotments that will take effect today, Feb, 1.

In a statement, NAP administrator Walter Macaranas said Saipan's benefit allotment will increase 41.5% for a household of four. This will be equal to Guam's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for fiscal year 2021 maximum benefit allotment.

Macaranas stated that this increment will remain available through Sept. 30, 2021. "This is an increase of 41.5% from $708 to $1,002 for a household size of four on Saipan. Tinian's maximum allotment will be higher than Saipan by 5.7%, while Rota and Northern Islands will be 21.7% above Saipan allotments," said Macaranas.

Ongoing NAP households who have been certified for February 2021 will see their benefits increase automatically. The approved income eligibility standards will be equal to the SNAP fiscal year 2021 100% poverty level used by 48 states, Washington, D.C., Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands for the SNAP net income test. This is an increase of approximately 35.7% from the level previously authorized level for fiscal year 2021, an increase from $1,610 to $2,184.

Macaranas said that they were able to get the increase because of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021, which became law on Dec. 27, 2020, which provided additional funding to the CNMI.

"Section 704 of the Act provided $614 million to the [CNMI], Puerto Rico, and American Samoa for nutrition assistance in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, of which $14 million shall be available to the CNMI," said Macaranas.

Income eligibility standards, also known as the maximum income guidelines, is the threshold that sets limits for eligibility for a household's monthly gross income according to the number of persons residing with the applicant household.

Macaranas stated that the maximum monthly benefit levels are the maximum amount of benefit dollars a household may receive in a month based on the household's income and the number of eligible members in the household

The maximum income guidelines for a household are the following:

- 1 person: $1,064,
- 2 persons: $1,437
- 3 persons: $1,810
- 4 persons: $2,184
- 5 persons: $2,557
- 6 persons: $2,930
- 7 persons: $3,304
- 8 persons: $3,677
- 9 persons: $4,051

Maximum monthly benefit levels for Saipan:

- 1 person: $300
- 2 persons: $551
- 3 persons: $789
- 4 persons: $1,002
- 5 persons: $1,190
- 6 persons: $1,428
- 7 persons: $1,579
- 8 persons: $1,804
- 9 persons: $2,030

Maximum monthly benefit levels for Tinian:

- 1 person: $317
- 2 persons: $582
- 3 persons: $834
- 4 persons: $1,059
- 5 persons: $1,257
- 6 persons: $1,509
- 7 persons: $1,668
- 8 persons: $1,906
- 9 persons: $2,144

Maximum monthly benefit levels for Rota and Northern Islands:

- 1 person: $365
- 2 persons: $670
- 3 persons: $960
- 4 persons: $1,219
- 5 persons: $1,448
- 6 persons: $1,737
- 7 persons: $1,920
- 8 persons: $2,194
- 9 persons: $2,468

# IPI wants expired visas restored

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific international (CNMI) LLC has requested the U.S. Department of Labor to restore the H2-B visa permits of its workers given the difficulty to repatriate them because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During a hearing last Thursday, Michael Dotts, former IPI general counsel, told the U.S District Court for the NMI and USDOL that IPI would like to have its H2-B workers' permits restored so that they are permitted to work at least for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Repatriation is difficult because the normal ports of entry that they transit through are now closed for transit. …Just in this situation, it would be nice if the workers could, when the stop-work order is lifted, they could go back and earn some wages. We would need permission from the U.S. government to allow this," Dotts said.

IPI's H2-B visas were initially supposed to expire at the end of January but USDOL revoked the H2-B visas earlier than expected due to non-payment of wages and other violations so IPI's H2-B workers have been without valid immigration status.

Currently, the only option for these workers is repatriation.

USDOL senior trial attorney Boris Orlov said another unit within USDOL handles this kinds of situations but, as far as he understands, USDOL does not revoke or reverse these decisions.

"My understanding is, once this has been done, it's usually not revoked or reversed. We will look into that and consult with them internally and get back with Mr. Dotts and report back to the court. Now that payments have been made, we could reach out to them and try to get their position on this. We learned about this request recently, and there's a separate unit of USDOL that handles [this]. We would need to consult with them to get a better understanding," he said.

U.S District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona told IPI that their request is out of her jurisdiction but encouraged IPI to continue with its compliance and hopefully persuade USDOL to reconsider.

"Actions speak louder than words and I don't blame the secretary's position. So long as there's even one payroll that's in arrears, these visas will not be restored. Given the efforts that have been undertaken, and the delivery of the payments, you might have a chance to convince the secretary to reconsider," she said.

To date, IPI reports that it has complied with the court's sanctions by paying 2020 back wages to its current employees, restored power and water to most of its employee housing, and are currently working on paying back wages to its employees from 2016 to 2017.

## ESTHER

*From Page 1*

held Saturday at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall in Susupe.

Muña's selection among four nominees was met with a standing ovation, thunderous applause, and loud cheers.

"It's interesting how health has become part of the economy," Muña said as she accepted the recognition, in reference to the COVID-19 pandemic that has hit not just the CNMI but the entire world, gravely impacting both the local and global economies. "One of the things that we wanted to make sure when we took this role…[was] to make sure we reach out to businesses…we wanted to make sure that we have partners."

Muña also recognized her CHCC team and expressed appreciation to partners and everyone who are involved in ensuring COVID-19 operations on island are sustained. She emphasized that just as economic health is essential for public health, public health too is essential for economic health. She thanked the Chamber for welcoming the CHCC, and shared the award with the "amazing team at CHCC," from the operations and planning, to logistics, financial, medical and nursing, contact tracing, and surveillance.

"The honor is really to our CHCC team. I only accepted the nomination because I want to recognize my team. They are the ones that have done the job. I'm the leader, yes, but they are my base. If we need to do something, they get it done," she said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

## IPI

*From Page 1*

struction workers that are suing IPI, in light Cui's failure to comply with a subpoena and pattern of disregarding the authority of the U.S District Court for the NMI, plaintiffs request that the court issue an order to show cause why Cui should not be held in contempt, and why the court should not impose a $10,000 per day fine as a contempt sanction against her.

In addition, Halegua and Berline want Cui to show cause as to why she should not be deemed to have waived all objections to the subpoena, and why Cui should not pay the plaintiffs' attorneys' fees and costs arising from her disobedience.

Berline said he properly served third-party witness Cui with a subpoena to produce documents and appear for a deposition on Jan. 26 at his office.

However, after serving Cui with the subpoena, an IPI executive allegedly immediately sent text messages to intimidate the process server that he would face "legal trouble" if he did not take back the subpoena. The next day, an IPI employee returned the subpoena to Berline's office.

"Neither this attempt at intimidation nor the act of returning the physical subpoena negates its legal validity. Cui never moved the court to quash or modify the subpoena. On Jan. 26, Cui then failed to appear for the deposition or produce any documents. Thus, Cui clearly violated her legal obligations under the subpoena," Berline said.

According to court documents, on Jan. 10, plaintiffs issued a subpoena for Cui, to produce documents and appear for a deposition at the law office of Berline, Jan. 26 at 9am.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

## STATUS

*From Page 1*

In a statement forwarded yesterday to *Saipan Tribune*, Sablan said that similar legislation, also numbered H.R. 560, passed the U.S. House of Representatives in the last Congress, but died in the Republican-controlled Senate.

In addition to making long-term workers and investors eligible for permanent residence in the Marianas, the new Northern Mariana Islands Legal Residents Relief Act of 2021 gives those eligible for this permanent status under Public Law 116-24 another chance to apply and makes certain family members eligible too.

After five years, persons with Marianas permanent residence status could apply for U.S. permanent residency, Sablan said.

He said the new H.R. 560 addresses concerns with implementation of P.L. 115-218, the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act, including clarifying congressional intent on touchback timing, extending the validity of an approved Commonwealth occupational survey, and increasing the time for CWs to apply for visas to enter the Marianas.

P.L. 115-218 or the Northern Mariana Islands Workforce Act of 2018 extended the CW-1 program up to 2029 and set a numeral cap of 13,000 for fiscal year 2019. The cap was slashed by 500 in fiscal year 2020, and three more times up to fiscal year 2023. Fiscal years 2024 to 2029 will have a reduction of 1,000 each and by 2030 the numerical cap is 1,000.

Sablan said his bill also ensures Marianas permanent residents and CWs can get relief and assistance in the aftermath of natural disasters.

When the House passed H.R. 560 last year, Sablan stated at that time that they needed to get some traction in the U.S. Senate if they are going to move the legislation forward.

"Since the Trump administration has not expressed support for the bill, this won't be easy but we have to give it our best effort," the delegate stated at the time.

## PAPER

*From Page 1*

stimulus funds, Bautista said that many people have already begun to receive paper checks and direct deposits.

He said there are almost 9,000 direct deposits and about 25,000 paper checks to be disbursed by the Division of Revenue and Taxation.

Speaking at a radio news briefing Friday, Bautista said he learned from DRT director Tracy Norita that the first batch of direct deposits came out a few days ago last week.

"That's about almost 9,000 direct deposit checks in people's bank accounts for folks who opted for direct deposit," Bautista said.

He said DRT has assured that they will soon be pushing out the next batch of direct deposits as well as the 25,000 paper checks for those who opted to go the traditional route.

The press secretary said the paper checks should start coming in by this week as DRT prepares disbursement of such checks through mail. "So that's exciting for us as a Commonwealth," he said.

Bautista said the Office of the Governor also continues to monitor U.S. congressional discussions regarding the additional stimulus check package, which would be an additional $1,400 on top of the $600 that people will be receiving.

"We continue to monitor that closely and we'll be keeping the community posted on that," he said.

Finance Secretary David Atalig stated in a press statement last week that their web portal is for those that got a paper check last time and would like to opt-in for direct deposit for this second stimulus and future stimulus payments.

The Division of Revenue and Taxation is expected to process nearly 31,000 second stimulus payments.

According to Finance's website, which can be found at https://finance.gov.mp, the CNMI stimulus portal is now open until March 20, 2021.

The portal allows an eligible person to register to receive his/her federal stimulus payment via Automated Clearing House directly to his/her bank account.

Eligibility and payment amount will be determined based on only 2019 tax returns.

# Garapan Restaurant Cafe & Grill now an NMC ProaPerks Partner

Garapan Restaurant Cafe & Grill is the latest company to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks Partner, joining many other businesses and organizations that provide exclusive discounts and benefits for NMC students, employees, and alumni.

All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now receive 10% off on food and beverages at Garapan Restaurant Cafe & Grill, which is located on Coral Street in Garapan.

NMC is in the introductory phase of rolling out the ProaPerks to alumni, students, and employees. For more information, visit marianas.edu/proaperks.

Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of the ProaPerks program and take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include Northern Marianas College alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing proaperks@marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

Garapan Restaurant Cafe & Grill is now a proud NMC ProaPerks partner. All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now receive 10% off on food and beverages.
NMC

# Over 10% of CNMI population now vaccinated—CHCC

**By JUSTINE NAUTA**
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Over 6,000 residents on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian have been inoculated with either the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine or the Moderna Inc. vaccine as of Jan. 28, according to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. dashboard.

CHCC said a total of 6,192 residents have already completed their first dose, while 3,057 have completed their second dose. This means that 9,325 first and second doses for the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines have been administered.

On Saipan, 5,877 have gotten their first dose, and 3,057 have already gotten their second dose. On Tinian 141 have gotten their first dose, and on Rota, 174 people have gotten their first dose. Because you have to take the Pfizer vaccine 21 days after the first dose, and 28 days for Moderna, the Tinian and Rota populations are expected to receive their second doses in mid-February.

As for age distribution the following are the numbers:

- 81+: 161 vaccinated
- 70-79: 668 vaccinated
- 60-69: 1,599 vaccinated
- 50-59: 1,305 vaccinated
- 40-49: 881 vaccinated
- 30-39: 882 vaccinated
- 20-29: 745 vaccinated
- <19: 11 vaccinated

## COVID-19 in Guam

Guam continued its drive-through community testing at the Old Carnival Grounds in Tiyan, Barrigada from 9am to 12pm last Friday.

According to the Joint Information Center, this is possible with the help of the Department of Public Health and Social Services in collaboration with the Mayors' Council of Guam, Guam National Guard, Department of Public Works, Guam Police Department, Guam Fire Department, University of Guam School of Nursing and Health Sciences, and other Gov-Guam and federal agencies.

DPHSS offers up to 300 COVID-19 tests, and is dependent on a "first-come, first-serve" basis.

Additionally, JIC reported four new cases of COVID-19 were identified out of 420 tests administered last Jan. 27. One case reported recent travel history and was identified in quarantine.

To date, Guam has a total of 7,572 COVID-19 cases with 129 deaths, 90 cases in active isolation, and 7,353 not in active isolation.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**
**Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality**
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
**www.dcrm.gov.mp**

**Eliceo D. Cabrera**
*Administrator*

**Janice E. Castro**
*Director, DCRM*

# AMENDMENT NO. 2
# NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

## TINIAN DIAMOND CASINO, RESTAURANT, & SUITES BUILDINGS WITH AN ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM COASTAL PERMIT NO. TMS-2020-X-082

The Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) will be holding a public hearing for the proposed Tinian Diamond Casino, Restaurant, and Suites Building with an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) in San Jose, Tinian.

The Bridge Investment Group, LLC is proposing to construct the Tinian Diamond Suite building on Lot No. 080 T 18, an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System on Lot No. 080 T 06, and to include the Tinian Diamond Casino operations within the Tinian Ferry Terminal building on Lot No. 016 T 01. The Tinian Diamond Casino and Ferry Terminal building will include a 64-seating restaurant with a kitchen facility, VIP restaurant and gaming center, security rooms, and two (2) VIP rooms at the Mezzanine level. The project is located at the Tinian Harbor in San Jose, Tinian.

The public hearing for this project is scheduled for **Thursday, February 4, 2021, at 5:00 PM.** The venue for this hearing will be conducted at the Tinian Elementary School Cafeteria, in San Jose, Tinian. COVID-19 protocols will be implemented and all participants are required to wear a mask at all times.

Written comments can be submitted by mail to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, sent by fax to 664-8315, or emailed to permitting@dcrm.gov.mp. The project files are open and can be reviewed by scheduling an appointment with DCRM. All written and oral comments received by DCRM will be included as part of the permit application records and will be considered in any decisions concerning the proposed projects. Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300/1 if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Tinian Diamond Casino, Restaurant, & Suite Buildings, and OWTS project.

/s/ JANICE E. CASTRO
Director
Division of Coastal Resources Management

# Home Rental Assistance
## RE-ANNOUNCEMENT

### ELIGIBILITY

- Families displaced by Typhoon Mangkhut or Super Typhoon Yutu
- Not a current recipient of any housing rental assistance program

Application package available for pickup at the Kagman Community Center, DYS Admin, DYS Tinian or Rota Offices, or can be downloaded from the Division's Website:
**www.dys.gov.mp**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL OR EMAIL**
(670) 237-1015/1016/1018
Jennifer Tanaka at jtanaka@dys.gov.mp or
Nina S. Nekaifes at nnekaifes@dys.gov.mp

**CSBG Disaster Supplemental funds will provide seven (7) months rental assistance to seventeen-(17) qualifying families.**

**SAIPAN**
- Nine (9) eligible families

**TINIAN**
- Four (4) eligible families

**ROTA**
- Four (4) eligible families

**PACKAGE DEADLINE:**
**February 10, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.**

*This program was made possible by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Disaster Relief Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-20), Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.*

# CUC to customers: Prepare for impending drought

In anticipation of the coming dry weather months that the CNMI is now beginning to experience, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. is encouraging its customers to think ahead and to anticipate water service needs over the next several months up until September 2021.

As the public might have experienced from previous years, dry weather will have an impact on the water table and the aquifers CUC relies on to provide water service 24 hours a day. CUC has had to establish scheduled water hours in areas where the water supply is depleted from over-pumping when rainfall is inconsistent to sustain full supply needs. The islands of the CNMI have experienced this problem for many years and it will not be changing any time soon.

As it has done in past years, CUC is asking its customers to plan for the following efforts to protect themselves if and when water restrictions may need to be imposed.

1 Gather several large containers that can be sealed to secure the chlorinated water from exposure and store in a dark location out of the direct impact of sunlight. Clean containers before using.

2 Gather several cases of bottled water to assure that everyone in your household has something refreshing when access to water is restricted.

3 Plan on keeping your bathtub clean in case you decide to use that item as a container to store water for washing at the sink, and/or flushing the toilet.

4 Be sure to inspect your water facilities in your home to eliminate any leaks that may waste water needed for your own use and to avoid spending for water you never get a chance to use.

5 Put up shade curtains over your outdoor plants to reduce watering requirements during the hot part of the day.

6 If you have large 1,000- to 5,000-gallon outdoor water containers, be sure to fill them early to guarantee a water reserve exists and over the next several months, use at least half the water in those tanks every two months to assure the water remains fresh and doesn't go stagnant and refill accordingly when water is available. You may also use the water in those tanks as a holding tank for your everyday water supply needs.

7 If you have a concrete tank for your home, be sure it is cleaned annually prior to the dry weather months and chlorinated to assure it is safe to use.

8 If you have a hot water tank, they need to be drained once a year to eliminate the build-up of material that falls out of solution (i.e., calcium, iron, manganese). First, turn off the power supply and the water source. Then drain by attaching a hose to the faucet on bottom side of tank and running it outside to the grass or to the nearest drain. Once drained, turn on the water source and gradually shut the faucet on tank. Allow to fill and then turn on heat source.

9 Get the latest information on CUC water services and potential scheduled water interruptions on the CUC website or Facebook page. ***(PR)***

# WHO: FSM is once more COVID-19-free

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—As of Jan. 29, 2021, the Federated States of Micronesia is once again considered COVID-19 free.

This comes soon after the World Health Organization reported that the only confirmed case COVID-19 in the FSM was deemed to be negative and historical after subsequent antibody and antigen tests. The first case was discovered through a PCR test on Jan. 7 in a returning vessel. Historical means the patient had a prior infection but has already recovered.

"This is great news for the people and government of the FSM," said FSM President David W. Panuelo in a statement. "It is a testament to the continued dedication of our national and state medical teams, who have been collaborating diligently, and in partnership with our friends and allies at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the World Health Organization. While the government's top priority at this moment is the implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination program, it is worth taking a moment to thank the collective efforts of our nation's medical experts, and our international bilateral and multilateral partners, for their tireless efforts to keep our nation safe." ***(PR)***

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### 4.6-magnitude quake in Yigo

At 9:28am on Jan. 30 2021, a report of a 4.6-magnitude earthquake occurred 76 kilometers north-northeast of Yigo, Guam. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

### 5.0-magnitude quake in Marianas

At 3:55pm on Jan. 31, 2021, a report of a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred at 21.766°N 145.455°E in the Marianas Islands region. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

### Water service outage in Kannat Tabla, Chalan Kiya, Navy Hill

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there is an emergency water service interruption (low pressure to no water) for customers in the following areas: the higher elevations of Kannat Tabla, Chalan Kiya, and upper and lower Navy Hill.

This is due to low water tank levels at the Kannat Tabla, Puerto Rico, and Calhoun water tanks. CUC operators are currently working to transfer water from nearby water tanks in order to supplement the low water tank levels in the affected areas.

Water service to the Kannat Tabla and Chalan Kiya areas is anticipated to be restored today, Monday, Feb. 1, 2021, at 2pm.

Water service to the upper and lower Nany Hill areas is anticipated to be restored on Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021, at 4pm.

For more information, contact the CUC hotlinew (236-4333) or monitor its Facebook page. ***(PR)***

### 5 Tinian pavilions temporarily closed

This is to inform the public that the five pavilions at Jones Beach on Tinian are under renovation. They were temporarily closed beginning last Jan. 29, 2021, to next Friday, Feb.y 5, 2021.

All other pavilions: Main Pavilion, Fiesta Grounds, YCC, Amphitheater, Taga Beach, and Tachogna will be open for public use. ***(PR)***

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**COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**
**STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Caller Box 10007 I Saipan, MP 96950 I Tel: (670) 664-1708 I Fax: (670) 664-1710 I Email: cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp
**VISION:** *"To promote a workforce development system that meets the need of businesses, job seekers and workers to support a strong and vibrant economy in the CNMI."*

**Josephine Mesta** *Chairperson* | **Annie G. Hayes** *Vice Chairperson* | **Polly Dlg Masga** *Secretary/Treasurer*

## Regular General Membership Meeting

**Thursday, February 04, 2021**
**9:00am – 11:00am**
**Venue: Virtual***

Note: Due to Covid-19 safety measures, if any members of the public are interested in making public comments or attending by Zoom, please email cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp for the link prior to the meeting. You must have access to a computer to participate.

**NICOLE BABAUTA** *Planning, Assessment, Evaluation, Research Committee Chairperson*
**VICKY BENAVENTE** *Policies and Procedures Committee Chairperson*
**VELMA PALACIOS** *Programs Committee Chairperson*
***Vacant*** *22nd Senatorial Representative*
***Vacant*** *22nd Legislature Representative*
**BERTHA LEON GUERRERO** *Member*
***Vacant*** *Tinian Representative*
***Vacant*** *Rota Representative*
**LORRAINE C. MAUI** *WIOA Core Program – ABE*
**MARYANN BORJA-ARRIOLA** *WIOA Core Program – OVR*
***Vacant*** *WIOA Core Program - WIOA*

### AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda of February 04, 2021
IV. Review and Adoption of December 16, 2020 General Membership Meeting Minutes
V. Public Comments
VI. Reports
  a. SWDB Chairperson
  b. Executive Committee
  c. Planning, Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Committee
  d. Program Committee
  e. Policies and Procedure Committee
  f. Core Programs
VII. Old Business
  a. Board Vacancies - Nominees
VIII. New Business
  a. Eligible Training Provider Application
  i. Northern Marianas College
IX. Executive Session
X. Announcements
XI. Next Meeting
X. Adjournment

Approved by:
/s/ Josephine DLG. Mesta
Chair

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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**
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**Eliceo D. Cabrera** Administrator
**Janice E. Castro** Director, DCRM

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios through the Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) hereby give notice that a CRM Agency Officials meeting will be held on Friday, February 5th, 2021, 2:00PM at the BECQ 3rd Floor Conference Room, in Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.

Due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and to ensure the health and safety of all, virtual public participation is highly encouraged via video conferencing through Google Meet (https://meet.google.com/bne-owge-dmu) or join via telephone by calling the DCRM office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance.

### AGENDA

**I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
  A. Call to Order
  B. Roll Call
  C. Adoption of Agenda
  D. Adoption of December 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes
**II. PERMIT APPLICATION REVIEW**
  1) CRM Permit Application No. TMS-2020-X-082 Project: TINIAN DIAMOND CASINO & SUITE PROJECT
  Applicant: Bridge Investment Group, LLC
  *Bridge Investment Group, LLC (BIG) is proposing to construct the Tinian Diamond Suite building on Lot No. 080 T 18, a Ferry Ticketing Center and an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) on Lot No. 080 T 06. BIG will be converting the former ferry terminal building into the Tinian Diamond Casino and is situated on Lot No. 016 T 01. The projects are located at the Tinian Harbor in San Jose, Tinian.*
  a. Agencies' Discussion
  b. Agencies' Determination
**III. OTHER MATTERS**
**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony regarding the above agenda items. (NOTE: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session).

/s/ JANICE E. CASTRO
Director, DCRM

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## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
**Office of the Executive Director**

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-21-015

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE WATER & WASTEWATER CERTIFIED OPERATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified firms for Professional Services for the Water & Wastewater Certified Operator Training Program for the islands Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

*The project is funded by the US Department of Interior-Office of Insular Affairs.*

Prospective Proposers for this RFP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$100.00** for one RFP package set.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies** of the proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RFP-21-015, Professional Services for the Water & Wastewater Certified Operator Training Program"* to CUC Procurement & Supply Division, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Dandan, Saipan MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on February 19, 2021**. Proposals mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time. Proposal shall be submitted on the provided Proposal Forms. Proposals will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal under the contract. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. All responses to this Request for Proposals should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the Proposer, awarded a contract.

This Request for Proposals does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract(s) is contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission and the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, Board of Director's approval. The contract(s) will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 29, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer, via email address-manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Vivian Santos, Human Resources Manager via email-Vivian.santos@cucgov.org; Francisco Matsunaga, HR Generalist, via email francisco.matsunaga@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Senior Administrative Support Technician via email- marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

# Kilili joins 4 others to push package of education bills in Congress

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) has joined four other lawmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives to introduce last Friday a package of education bills to reopen and rebuild U.S. schools, save educators' jobs, and help students recover lost time in the classroom.

The Rebuild and Reopen America's Schools Act, introduced with Rep. Donald Norcross (NJ-01), the Save Education Jobs Act introduced with Rep. Jahana Hayes (CT-05), and the Learning Recovery Act, introduced with Sablan and Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (NM-03), are part of the House Committee on Education and Labor's response to the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, educators, and parents. The committee is chaired by Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03).

"Prior to the pandemic, our education system was suffering from crumbling infrastructure, understaffed schools, and widening achievement gaps. Now, after an unprecedented disruption in students' lives as a result of the pandemic, we are seeing existing inequities exacerbated," said Scott. "The package of bills introduced [Friday] reflects our commitment to helping students, educators, and parents overcome the pandemic, reopen our schools, and finally access a quality, public education."

## Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act of 2021

The Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act of 2021 invests $130 billion—targeted at high-poverty schools—to help reopen public schools and provide students and educators a safe place to learn and work. In addition to helping students get back to school, the bill will also create over two million jobs during a time of widespread unemployment.

"My top priorities in Congress have always been jobs, education, and security, and all three are addressed in the Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act. Investing in our nation's public schools will create good-paying jobs, improve educational outcomes and ensure that students learn in state-of-the-art buildings that are safe and secure," said Norcross. "Long before this pandemic, our schools were all in dire need of repair, and now as our nation fights COVID-19 the need to rebuild has never been greater. As public officials, it is our duty to protect our children, fight for their futures and deliver high-quality education regardless of their zip code—and this bill does just that."

## Save Education J obs Act of 2021

Since February of last year, more K-12 education jobs have been lost than nearly all of the local education jobs lost during the Great Recession. On top of that, states are facing a $555 billion budget shortfall over the next three years. Without sufficient funding from the federal government to support states and school districts during the recovery, experts estimate 1.4 million to 1.9 million education jobs will be lost over the next one to two years alone. The Save Education Jobs Act of 2021 would establish an Education Jobs Fund to stabilize the education workforce, delivering up to $261 billion to states and school districts over 10 years.

"Despite the heroic work of our educators, we know that COVID-19 has undone months of academic gains, exacerbated existing disparities, increased student mental health needs, and left far too many students behind," said Hayes. "The cuts we are already seeing throughout the country, and can expect to continue seeing in the future, are devastating for students and the future of public education. We need to invest in more supports, not less, to ensure that schools can meet these needs and challenges during and after the pandemic. Teacher job losses have long lasting impacts on the quality and efficacy of learning in our communities, and only further entrench growing disparities in our highest need districts. It is time the federal government uphold its responsibility for students and recognize the urgency of this moment."

## Learning Recovery Act of 2021

Left unaddressed, lost classroom time will have long-term effects on students' success and on the U.S. economy as a whole. Researchers estimate that by 2040, the lost time in the classroom for the current K-12 cohort will result in an earnings loss of $110 billion per year and will reduce overall gross domestic product by $173 billion to $271 billion per year. The Learning Recovery Act of 2021 provides $75 billion over two years via Title I-A to build out summer school, extend school days, or extend schools programs.

"The pandemic has widened the divide where our students in Title I schools, those with the least resources, have suffered the greatest learning challenges and losses. We must not abandon these children. Additional Title I funding is essential to set our schools on a path towards equitable recovery. With love and concern for our children, I am proud to co-lead the Learning Recovery Act with Chairman Bobby Scott to extend learning opportunities," said Ledger Fernandez.

"America's students continue to lose precious months of quality instruction to the coronavirus crisis. This loss is only widening the achievement gap and disparities between school districts that existed well before the pandemic," said Sablan. "The Learning Recovery Act provides funding that schools facing severe budget cuts need to address these challenges whether it be extended school years, school days, or summer school to recover the lost learning time. And the Act mandates a federal study on the learning loss crisis because our nation as a whole must fully understand its impact and possible solutions." ***(PR)***


**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**
**NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION**
Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

## JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: January 18, 2021 CLOSING DATE: February 02, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

| NMHC JVA No. | Positions: | Salary: |
|---|---|---|
| 2021-001 | CDBG-DR Procurement Officer (1-Position) | UNGRADED $40,000.00 to $45,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-002 | CDBG-DR Compliance Supervisor (1- Position) | UNGRADED $45,000.00 to $50,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-003 | CDBG-DR Compliance Specialist (1-Position) | UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-004 | CDBG-DR Compliance Specialist – ***Rota Field Office*** (1-Position) | UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-005 | CDBG-DR Loan Specialist (2-Positions) | UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-006 | CDBG-DR Loan Specialist – ***Tinian Field Office*** (1-Position) | UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-007 | CDBG-DR Loan Specialist – ***Rota Field Office*** (1-Position) | UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-008 | CDBG-DR Administrative Specialist (1-Position) | UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-009 | CDBG-DR Construction Inspector (2-Position) | UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-010 | CDBG-DR Construction Inspector – ***Tinian Field Office*** (1-Position) | UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum |
| 2021-011 | CDBG-DR Construction Inspector – ***Rota Field Office*** (1-Position) | UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum |

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre- employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director



## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 21-01

**United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands**

### Generalist Clerk

Permanent, Full-Time Position
Location: SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI)
Starting grade: CL-22 step 1 to CL-23 Step 25 ($31,755 to $49,195 includes 12.62% COLA)
(With promotional potential to CL-24.)
Opening Date: February 1, 2021 • Applications received by February 8, 2021 will be given priority.

**Position Overview:**
Incumbent will perform various functions in supporting court operations, including maintaining and processing case information, and assistance in handling progression of cases to final disposition. Incumbent also performs duties including customer service, cashier intake, review and image scanning of civil, criminal, and bankruptcy documents which are the official record of the Court. Assists with shelving of law library materials. Performs other support duties as assigned. Complete position description is available upon request, or via Internet at http://www.nmid.uscourts.gov. This position includes full federal employment benefits, with paid leave and holidays, health insurance, life insurance and federal retirement benefits.

**Minimum Qualifications and Preferred Qualifications:**
High school graduate or equivalent with at least two years of general work experience. Education above the high school level may be substituted for required general experience. Additional preference will be given for college graduate and work experience in a court or legal environment. Applicants should demonstrate sound ethics and judgment, be able to communicate effectively (orally and in writing), and be skilled in word processing, spreadsheets, and be trainable in using automated systems. Additional preference will be given for skill in using automated case management systems. Successful completion of an aptitude test may be required.

**Citizenship Requirement:**
Applicants are required to be U.S. citizens or aliens who are authorized to work in the U.S.

**Notice to Applicants:**
Excepted service appointments are "at will" and may be terminated by either the court or the employee at any time for any reason. Selectees will be subject to a background check or investigation and suitability determination; and may be subject to an updated background investigations every five years. Employees are subject to the Judicial Code of Conduct. Direct deposit of pay is required.

**Application Procedure:**
Each applicant is required to submit a Cover Letter, Resume, and an AO-78 application form. AO-78 forms are on the Internet at: http://www.nmid.uscourts.gov or may be picked up at the U.S. District Court. Position is open until filled; applications received by February 8, 2021 will be given priority.

**We prefer you to email signed applications to:**
HR@nmid.uscourts.gov

**You may deliver signed applications to:**
Clerk of Court
United States District Court
for the Northern Mariana Islands
3rd Floor, United States Courthouse, Gualo Rai, Saipan

*The United States District Court is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*

# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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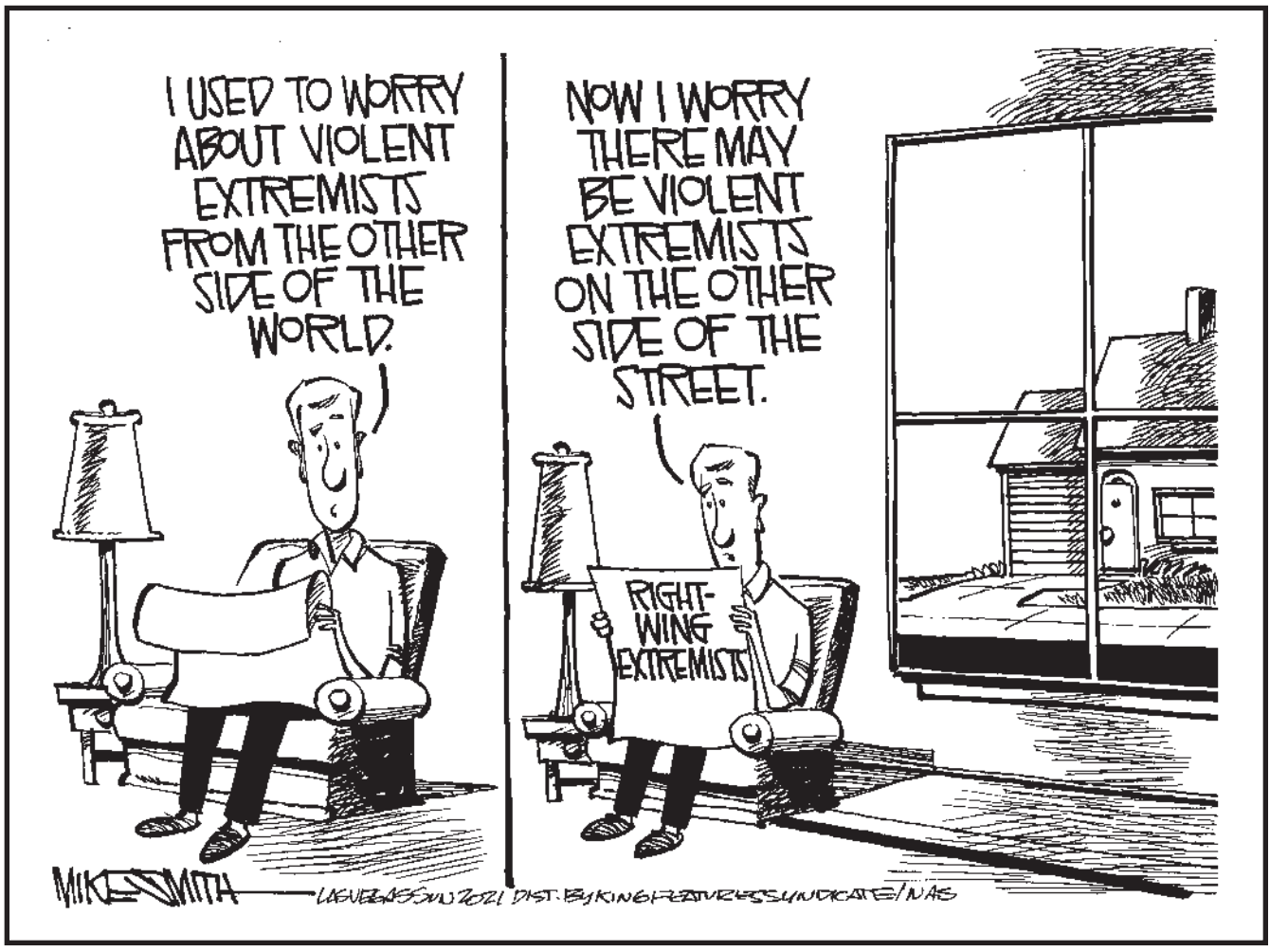

I USED TO WORRY ABOUT VIOLENT EXTREMISTS FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD.
NOW I WORRY THERE MAY BE VIOLENT EXTREMISTS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET.
RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS
MIKE SMITH
LAS VEGAS SUN 2021 DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/NAS

## EDITORIAL

# Pakistan's middle finger: The country's high court releases the man convicted of murdering Daniel Pearl

On Thursday, a panel of three people who call themselves judges ordered the release of the man convicted of orchestrating the kidnapping and murder of journalist Daniel Pearl—with the insulting coda that the reasons will "be recorded later." America must not rest until this Pakistani travesty is corrected.

Pearl

Pearl, a 38-year-old *Wall Street Journal* reporter and a very good man, disappeared 19 years ago in Karachi on his way to what he thought was an interview with a radical Muslim cleric. Terrorists abducted him and issued ransom demands. Nineteen years ago, on Feb. 1, 2002, Pearl was beheaded on camera, after uttering these words: "My father is Jewish, my mother is Jewish, I am Jewish."

In 2002, Pakistani courts convicted Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, a British national with a record of other kidnappings, of orchestrating the abduction and killing. He and three accomplices were locked away—until last spring, when a lower court overturned their convictions, pending the appeal that just failed at the nation's Supreme Court.

By no accounting are Sheikh and the other three the sole guilty parties here. A 31,000-word report by a Georgetown faculty-research investigative project released in 2011 fingered Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the self-proclaimed 9/11 mastermind now rotting in Guantanamo Bay, for the murder, while detailing an astonishing 26 accomplices. The most charitable way to frame Sheikh's crimes is that he only abducted Pearl, serving him up to his eventual slaughterers.

The image of him walking free cannot be the end. The Biden administration, reiterating a demand made by the Trump administration, seeks to extradite Sheikh from Pakistan to try him on a 2002 indictment by a New Jersey grand jury. All who mouth platitudes about protecting journalists, about countering violent jihadism, about standing up to anti-Semitism: This is your fight. Echo the call.

©2021 New York Daily News

# I was caught up in a religious cult. Here's one way to reach today's young extremists

**By KRISTEN SKEDGELL**
Chicago Tribune

*Kristen Skedgell is the author of* Losing the Way: A Memoir of Spiritual Longing, Manipulation, Abuse and Escape. *A graduate of Yale Divinity School and Columbia University School of Social Work, she now lives in the Hudson Valley with her husband, poet Afaa Michael Weaver.*

I was once an extremist. Now I am not. I was a member of a fundamentalist Bible organization that was homophobic and misogynistic, denied the Holocaust and used psychological terror and manipulation to control its followers. The leader believed in eugenics. Now I am a retired grandmother living on a farm. How did this happen?

President Joe Biden wants to unite the country by encouraging us to stand in one another's shoes. But standing in the shoes, more likely boots, of one whose views we consider abhorrent and immoral is no easy matter. The first step, if you'll forgive the pun, is to acknowledge our views are equally abhorrent and immoral to them.

During my 15 years in the group, the only "outsider" who made a consistent effort to keep in touch with me was my mother. She wrote letter after letter though I rarely answered. She had been, after all, offended by the leader from the moment she heard him speak. "Sounds like the Third Reich to me," she said. I didn't understand what she meant. I was only 14.

Being the liberal-minded intellectual that she was, my mother, a secular Jew, never attempted to limit my explorations. She believed the First Amendment applied to everyone, irrespective of age. She learned this lesson at 6, when her progressive father sat her at Sunday dinner and engaged her in lively conversation with his guest, the political activist and socialist, Eugene V. Debs. (My grandfather, William Castleman, owned a press that published The Unionist, the largest labor newspaper in Chicago in 1920.)

My mother assumed my innate good sense would lead me out of the fantasy land of absolutism back onto a reasonable path. But she underestimated the seductive power of certainty, especially to an adolescent. Extremists know. I knew.

Eventually, I was sent to an elite New England boarding school. It was a ruse I wasn't going to fall for. I brought the leader's message to Phillips Exeter with both barrels blazing.

But, I was still naive to the true agenda of the organization.

A prominent leader in the group visited me during the spring semester of my senior year. He revealed a plot by an elite group of multimillionaires to form a one-world government and challenge God's natural order (which included the supremacy of white European races). Many of my classmates, he said, were children of this elite group and they must learn The Truth. He charged me to stir things up on campus.

Doubts arose. What did conspiracy theories have to do God? This was a moment when I might have let someone stand in my shoes. I was sure I was no longer in them myself and I was afraid.

But I didn't know who or how to ask for help. So, I went ahead and attempted a stir, but the only one at all affected was the chaplain, who castigated me for being, among other things, an appalling disgrace to an intellectual community.

I can't say as I disagree with him now but had he been the one to step into my empty shoes, he might have spared me more than a decade of future grief—things such as paramilitary exercises, survivalist training, hostage exercises, target practice and all kinds of serious abuse at the hands of a deranged leader.

True, I might have been insufferable but, over the years, I've fantasized another outcome.

In my dream, I see a nonjudgmental man, sitting down next to me, curious about me and my experience in the group. He doesn't criticize or argue about my beliefs. He's just interested in me. He listens.

And in my dream, the man wonders what I wished for as a child and what I hope for in the future. He asks about my dearest memory and darkest fear. And I tell him because there's some kind of goodness and sincerity in him. Empathy, maybe.

Whatever it is, it brings me back to myself. To my damaged, vulnerable, heartbroken human self. And he tells me not to be afraid because there's a whole country full of people like me and we're all just trying to work it out together. United.

I wish that's how it happened for me. Once I was stripped of the last remnants of my integrity, identity and independence, death seemed like the only alternative. But I had a toddler and a newborn to think of. And a mother waiting for us, willing to do anything, which included getting me professional help.

I didn't start out as an extremist. It happened little by little, the way a frog boils to death as you slowly turn up the heat on a pot. It never feels the temperature rise until it's too late. Healing takes time too. But it's possible if we reach out and there's somebody's outstretched hand to grab.

**EDITORIAL POLICY** Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

# Demystifying hyper-militarization of the Marianas

**RICK'S COLUMN**

**By RICK PEREZ**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

*Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called* Guam Affairs *at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.*

### Some distinctive characteristics

There are several characteristics that help define our ancient Chamorro Pacific Islander civilization and our Marianas Islands. One distinctive characteristic of our island chain that has been referenced for decades is the idea of where our island chain is located in relation to other places. This characteristic comes up in conversations related to geography and distance. Folks talk about the Marianas being close to the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, and Russia, and farther away from Hawaii, Alaska, and the continental U.S.

These distance related conversations are usually framed within the context of tourism, civilian flight travel times, most things military related, or where America's day is supposed to begin. But not as much discussion outside of these topics refers to proximity and distance from the standpoint of how environmentally compromised our island chain has become from military operations, the rare diseases our people have contracted from being exposed to toxins produced by military activity, or the proximity to immediate and complete VA medical care for our military veterans.

### Remoteness? Defined by who?

Another distinctive characteristic that is tied to our island chain is this idea that the Marianas are remotely located places. One dominant view messaged by Joint Region Marianas, migrants, Congress, and the military communities stationed throughout the island chain is that locational remoteness has incalculable value in terms of preparing for war. What is odd and telling about this characteristic is that while Joint Region Marianas views our island chain as a place remotely located in relation to Hawaii or Washington, D.C., it also views our island chain as a nearby steppingstone to East Asia. Remoteness and closeness become the oddest of colonizer couples, captured by language that contains words like "military hub" or "power projection."

One follow-up question that comes to mind is this: "In what other ways are the Marianas Islands considered remote?" Let's recall that the island chain isn't remotely located in relation to the ocean or the equator. Our island chain isn't remotely located to the Chamorro people who have inhabited the Marianas for thousands of years. Our island chain isn't remotely located to some of the world's best fishing grounds or some of the world's best culinary and sailing traditions, some of the oldest languages spoken on the planet or sometimes extreme weather patterns.

What is remote is the unilateral national decision-making authority power found halfway around the world in Washington, D.C. that has brought about tremendous undemocratic change and lasting harm with ironclad control to our total region, Pacific Islander social and political systems, and total environment over the past several decades.

### Gof Taddong i Tasi

Another distinctive characteristic of our ancient island chain home is this idea of depth. Depth has many meanings to our families, and it starts with the fact that our Chamorro Pacific Islander civilization is atop the summit of the largest mountain range on earth that we commonly refer to as the Marianas Trench. The production of the Trench and our island chain is an outcome of tectonic plate movement and volcanic activity occurring over tens of millions of years.

The majesty of the Marianas Trench has been the pillar of our unique ocean ecosystem that has been home to some of the best and tastiest reef and deep-sea fish stock in the world, home to some of the rarest marine mammals in the world, and home to some of the most incredible haggan in the world. Deep knowledge of the sea has been produced and shared amongst several of our local fisherman, swimmers, elders, and sailors, who understand currents, tides, winds, stars, and the sheer power of the water that intimately envelops our undersea mountain range and defines us all as Chamorros of the deep blue Marianas.

### The darker side of the undersea: Amalgamations of state sponsored violence

Our deep blue ocean mountain environment has also attracted and characterized the evolving and sometimes dark or very dark behaviors of the U.S., Chinese, and Russian militaries, who train for state sponsored violence underwater, but who also have been responsible for damaging and disrespecting our ancient blue ocean mountainous region for external, near seas and overseas contingency security purposes. The Russians and Americans have for decades played this underwater cat and mouse game in our region, where Navy-CIA operations against the Russian Pacific Fleet have been undertaken, resulting in at least one reported undersea collision. American Polaris submarines previously stationed at Sumay, Guam represented the most lethal and invisible arm of America's nuclear triad for decades, making Guam a Russian military target. The Chinese are now a major participant in patrolling the undersea environment and have more manned submarines than the United States. These expressions of violence have resulted in our deep blue mountain range region being used without our consent for underwater spying, live fire training, communications highway activity, submarine target practice, ocean based nuclear launch platform stationing, massive underwater ordnance explosive testing, which produce a series of dark consequences to include the death of marine mammals and major disruptions to fish stock behavior.

Today, this trend of hyper-militarization continues to grow as one defining and sometimes very dark characteristic, ever-present throughout our ancient island chain region. If we do not reconsider demystifying for ourselves and our Pacific Islander families what constitutes and characterizes great power national and international security and training for war, we can expect our haggan, bunita, and toson as well as our local fishermen, swimmers, divers and sailors to be alongside more and more instruments of war inserted into our ecosystem to include submerged buoys, crewed and unmanned undersea platforms, and greater numbers of crewed and unmanned surface vessels as the American, Chinese, Russian, and DPRK arms race continues.

It is in our collective best interest to begin to teach ourselves and learn more about what constitutes national security and great power relations because our Marianas Islands and our Chamorro civilization continue to be exploited by the United States, China, Russia, and DPRK like few places have ever been.

# Moving the country in a more equitable direction

*Editor's Note Delegate Gregorio Sablan (Ind-MP) and Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) penned this joint column on the need for more federal assistance in U.S. territories.*

**By GREGORIO KILILI M. SABLAN and RAÚL M. GRIJALVA**
*Special to the Saipan Tribune*

With a new President at the helm, and with Democrats controlling both the House of Representatives and the Senate, the federal government has a unique opportunity to focus on policies that benefit all Americans, including those residing in the U.S. territories. After years of neglect and a clearly failed approach by the Trump administration, now is the time to resolve longstanding inequities in federal treatment of territorial residents.

Nearly 4 million Americans live in the territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands of the United States. Ninety-eight percent of this population identifies as a member of one or more racial or ethnic minorities. Territorial residents experience both the systemic racism mainland Americans are familiar with and the second-class status and marginalization created by antiquated federal policies that prevent full political representation.

There is no justification for maintaining the status quo any longer. It is time to move forward.

The Biden-Harris administration and Congress should start by providing full federal voting rights for all Americans residing in the territories. As it stands, U.S. citizens in the territories are unable to vote for president and lack voting representation in Congress. Despite being qualified for military service and being treated, in other respects, as full Americans, close to 4 million otherwise eligible men and women were barred from participating in the most recent general election, despite its enormous impact on their livelihoods and futures.

Without the capacity to fully participate in our democratic processes, territorial residents will continue to have their needs ignored, deferred or minimized. It doesn't take any imagination to see what happens when some citizens are fully represented at the federal level and others aren't. The lack of federal resources in the territories compared to the states—not just for disaster relief but of the everyday variety—is already stark and deserves real attention.

For this reason, and others, we strongly support H.R. 1—For the People Act of 2021, which proposes a Congressional Task Force on Voting Rights of United States Citizen Residents of Territories of the United States. The Task Force would be responsible for recommending changes that would extend full and equal voting rights to residents of U.S. territories in federal elections.

If our fellow Democrats hope to build a healthier and more equitable nation, they must also prioritize the expansion and extension of key federal programs to the territories. Although states receive Medicaid funding according to residents' per-capita income, this funding is arbitrarily capped for territories, heavily and needlessly straining available resources and threatening the lives of thousands of low-income Americans.

Similarly, the Supplemental Security Income, which aids disabled, blind, and low-income adults and children, excludes residents of American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands of the United States from participation. Several pieces of legislation are expected to be introduced in this Congress to close the gap in these programs and others, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. This would provide crucial assistance to hundreds of thousands of eligible individuals residing in the territories and positively contribute to their local economies.

Any efforts to end inequities and overcome the impacts of racism cannot fully succeed without addressing the political relationship between the U.S. and its territories. This is perhaps most apparent in Puerto Rico, whose political status has been a focus of intense debate for decades and became a prominent subject during the last election. The Biden-Harris team has pledged to prioritize resolving Puerto Rico's political status, and as leaders in Congress on the committee with jurisdiction over the issue, we intend to do the same.

A concerted federal response to these issues is long overdue. The Biden-Harris administration's first 100 days will be heavily scrutinized for signs of material successes, and anyone searching for a bellwether should look to the U.S. territories for signs that the lives of long-neglected Americans are being measurably improved.

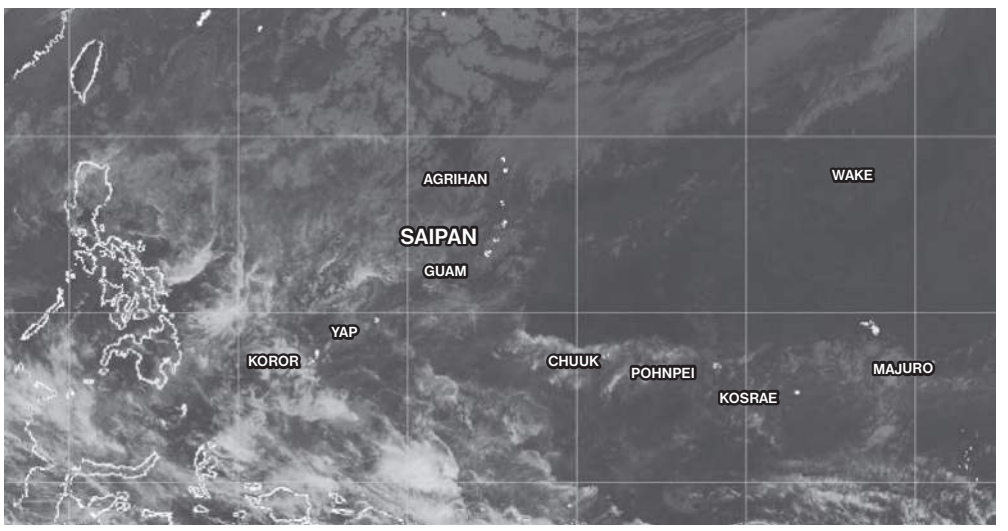
The new administration has the support of a Democratic-controlled Congress to help drive this process forward. With some thoughtful consideration and a bit of courage, we can lead the country in a more equitable direction. But that promise of equitable treatment will only have meaning if every American, including those in the territories, is brought along for the ride.

# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breezy. Partly cloudy in the morning then becoming partly sunny. Scattered showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph. | Breezy. Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph. | Partly sunny. Isolated showers in the morning, then scattered showers in the afternoon. | Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. |
| 87º / 77º | 86º / 77º | 87º / 77º | 87º / 77º | 87º / 77º |

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE




**PICTURE TIME: 8:57 AM, SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2021**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Radar shows showers across the Marianas, with cloud tops between 15 to 20 kft. A second band of showers is located to the east of the Marianas and is associated with a weak trade wind disturbance. Buoys indicate a spike in the northerly swell with the Tanapag buoy reading 9 to 10 feet with a 9 second period. Altimetry shows seas farther north reaching 10 to 13 feet.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/*

| MICRONESIA | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Showers | 84º / 76º |
| Palau | Thunderstorm | 83º / 78º |
| Yap | Thunderstorm | 83º / 78º |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorm | 86º / 80º |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorm | 85º / 79º |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorm | 85º / 79º |
| Majuro | Partly Cloudy | 85º / 80º |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:46 AM | 6:15 PM |
| Tuesday | 6:45 AM | 6:15 PM |
| Wednesday | 6:45 AM | 6:16 PM |
| Thursday | 6:45 AM | 6:16 PM |
| Friday | 6:45 AM | 6:16 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Today | - | 9:21 AM | 9:33 PM |
| Tuesday | - | 10:03 AM | 10:29 PM |
| Wednesday | - | 10:45 AM | 11:25 PM |
| Thursday | - | 11:28 AM | - |
| Friday | 12:23 AM | 12:14 PM | - |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Partly Cloudy | 77º / 66º |
| Beijing | Mostly Sunny | 41º / 25º |
| Hong Kong | Mostly Sunny | 72º / 63º |
| Honolulu | Partly Cloudy | 76º / 65º |
| London | Showers | 52º / 46º |
| Los Angeles | Sunny | 70º / 49º |
| Manila | Mostly Cloudy | 88º / 75º |
| Melbourne | Partly Cloudy | 75º / 55º |
| Miami | Partly Cloudy | 77º / 65º |
| New York | Mostly Sunny | 47º / 32º |
| Osaka | Partly Cloudy | 46º / 36º |
| Paris | Mostly Cloudy | 52º / 45º |
| Pusan | Partly Cloudy | 48º / 28º |
| Rome | Cloudy | 61º / 52º |
| Salem | Mostly Sunny | 70º / 49º |
| San Francisco | Mostly Sunny | 38º / 17º |
| Seoul | Sunny | 36º / 23º |
| Tokyo | Sunny | 48º / 36º |
| Washington, DC | Cloudy | 50º / 36º |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | FEET |
|---|---|---|
| 4:02 AM | Low Tide | -0.36 |
| 10:48 AM | High Tide | 1.80 |
| 4:43 PM | Low Tide | 0.79 |
| 9:47 PM | High Tide | 1.68 |

## STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

**Continue good hand hygiene**

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

**Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic**

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

**Rumor control**

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

*Source: Office of the Governor*

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**ADVERTISING** For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769.
E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

### DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117 | 6:55am | 7:35am | 1, 4, 6 |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117/183 | 6:55am | 9:50pm | 1 via Guam |

**GUAM-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA183 | 8:00pm | 9:50pm | 1, 3, 5 |

### ARRIVALS

**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA174 | 5:10am | 5:51am | 1, 4, 6 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184/174 | 10:40pm | 5:51am+1 | 3, 5 via Guam |

**MANILA (MNL)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184 | 10:40pm | 4:30am+1 | 1, 3, 5 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1301 | 8:30AM | 9:00AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 1302 | 11:00AM | 11:30AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat |
| 1303 | 3:30PM | 4:00PM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3101 | 9:30AM | 10:00AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 3102 | 12:00AM | 12:30AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat |
| 3103 | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun |

**ROTA TO GUAM**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3401 | 12:15 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**GUAM TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4301 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1201 | 7:00 | 7:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1203 | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |
| 1204 | 10:00 | 10:15 | Daily |
| 1205 | 11:00 | 11:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1206 | 12:00 | 12:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1207 | 13:00 | 13:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1208 | 14:00 | 14:15 | Daily |
| 1209 | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| 1210 | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| 1211 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Daily |
| 1212 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2101 | 7:30 | 7:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2102 | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | 10:30 | 10:45 | Daily |
| 2105 | 11:30 | 11:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2106 | 12:30 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2107 | 13:30 | 13:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2108 | 14:30 | 14:45 | Daily |
| 2109 | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2110 | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2111 | 17:30 | 17:45 | Daily |
| 2112 | 18:30 | 18:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

# Business

# Bank of Guam closes 2 locations

**HAGATNA, Guam**—After nearly 40 years of serving residents and businesses in the island's northern community, Bank of Guam officially closed their Dededo and Harmon branches in preparation for The Start of Something New.

Over the years, the bank has invested heavily in its digital banking capabilities to deliver greater accessibility, convenience and security to its customers. The pandemic-related demand for digital options has elevated the need for on-demand, reliable and safe access to banking services.

Coined "The Start of Something New," the bank promises a forward-looking, integrated approach to the experience offered to their customers, bridging a legacy of personalized services alongside the leading-edge conveniences of digital banking.

Stated Joaquin P.L.G. Cook, Bank of Guam president and chief executive officer, "For nearly 40 years, we have had the honor and pleasure of being part of the Dededo and Harmon communities. Today, as we officially close our doors to these locations, we are excited to begin our journey toward The Start of Something New. As we begin this next step, let me assure you that one thing remains constant and that is our commitment to our people and communities. I invite you to join us on this journey as we build better experiences for all of you."

Cook

For additional information, please contact Jackie Marati at (671) 472-5258.

## » Expands efforts to deliver better experiences

Bank of Guam was established nearly 50 years ago, and as The People's Bank, is Guam's first locally-owned and chartered bank. Built on the vision of founder Jesus S. Leon Guerrero to be the driving force for prosperity in the communities it serves, the bank's work continues through its network of over 600 employees spanning 6,000 miles and 18 branches across Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Yap, the Republic of Belau, and San Francisco, California. ***(PR)***

## Biden warns of growing cost of delay on economic aid plan

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—President Joe Biden is warning of a steep and growing "cost of inaction" on his $1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief plan as the White House searched for "creative" ways to win public support for a package that is getting a cold shoulder from Senate Republicans.

In the age of the coronavirus, it's not as simple as jumping on a plane to travel the country and try to gin up a groundswell. And at a time of deep polarization, Biden may struggle to convince Republican voters of the urgency when Congress already has approved $4 trillion in aid, including $900 billion last month.

Biden signaled on Friday for the first time that he's willing to move ahead without Republicans.

"I support passing COVID relief with support from Republicans if we can get it," he told reporters. "But the COVID relief has to pass. No ifs, ands or buts."

His message so far has been that a fresh $1.9 trillion in aid would be a bargain compared to the potential damage to the world's largest economy if it doesn't pass. An aggressive push for vaccinations and generous aid to individuals would help put parents back to work and let children return to school and improve their lifetime earnings, Biden said at a Friday meeting with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in the Oval Office.

"We have learned from past crises that the risk is not doing too much," he said. "The risk is not doing enough."

Only a week into his presidency, Biden is confronting the challenge of selling his first major piece of legislation to a country he has pledged to unite. Private calls with Republican lawmakers have yet to produce any progress on reaching a deal, while Senate Democrats are now preparing to pass the measure strictly on partisan lines as soon as next week.

Some Biden allies have expressed frustration that the administration has not more clearly defined what the massive legislation would actually accomplish. The new president instead has largely focused his first nine days in office on signing executive orders rolling back his predecessor's policies.

In particular, Biden, for whom the widespread distribution of coronavirus vaccines will be a defining test, has not explained what the increased money for testing and vaccination would achieve—including how much quicker the White House believes it would help bring about an end to the pandemic.

Biden's outreach to senators has largely brought criticism that the plan should be more targeted and that the country can afford to wait to see the effects of the stimulus dollars that were approved in December.

Republican lawmakers see a need for speeding vaccinations, but one Senate aide said their offices are not being bombarded with calls for an additional aid package. Constituents are more focused on the looming impeachment trial, said the aide, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

This has left the Biden team trying to expand its outreach beyond Capitol Hill.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden recognizes the importance of speaking directly to the American people about his plan for vaccinations and supporting the economy, but the pandemic has limited his ability to safely travel to drum up support. The administration is relying on TV interviews by White House officials and allies with local media and national shows like "The View," as well as calls with governors, local officials and progressive and civic groups.

## For GameStop day traders, the moment they've dreamed about

AP

A vehicle passes in front of a GameStop store in Vernon Hills, Ill., Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021.

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—They've endured a financial crisis. Two deep recessions. Mounds of student debt. Stagnant pay. Costly health care. Dim job prospects.

They've seen the uber-rich grow richer while a pandemic threw tens of millions of people out of work and left many more isolated and vulnerable at home.

Now, they feel, it's payback time.

Nearly a decade after the Occupy protest movement left Wall Street more or less unscathed, the citadel of financial might faces a new assault.

Day traders, mobilized on a subreddit page, have poured about all the money they can find into the stocks of a struggling video game retailer called GameStop and a few other beaten-down companies. Their buying has swollen those companies' share prices beyond anyone's imagination—and, not coincidentally, inflicted huge losses on the hedge funds of the super-rich, who had placed bets that the stocks would drop.

Their strategy, of course, is freighted with risk. The prices of the stocks they've bought are now multiples above any level justified by revenue, earnings or future prospects. The danger is that at any time, the stocks could collapse.

Maybe so. But as one Reddit user wrote Friday, asserting that hedge fund financiers would drink Champagne as they looked down upon Occupy Wall Street protesters in 2011:

"I'd rather lose it all than give them what they need to destroy me ... I'll burn it all down just to spite them."

Their rage and hell-bent drive to pick on powerful Wall Street financiers have sent shivers through ordinary investors and heightened fears about the fragility of the markets in general after a prolonged period of stock gains fueled by ultra-low interest rates. Those fears just caused the S&P 500 index to suffer its worst week of losses since October.

GameStop shares? They rocketed nearly 70% on Friday. Over the past three weeks, they've delivered a stupefying 1,600% gain.

"They figured out how to play the way Wall Street has been playing for a long time," said Robert Thompson, who has long tracked cultural trends as director of Syracuse University's Bleier Center for Television and Popular Culture. "I'm amazed it didn't happen earlier."

Feeding the frenzy have been young traders like 27-year-old Zach Weir, who this week bought five shares of GameStop.

"I'm a college student, so that's basically a month's rent for me," said Weir, who is pursuing a master's degree in marketing.

He did it, he said, because he believes in the cause: Protecting a cherished game store, where he would hang out as a teenager on Friday nights, from financial tycoons who want the company to fail.

And if he loses his investment?

"If my account goes to zero, it goes to zero," Weir said. "At this point, it's not about the money. I think this is bigger than the money now"

Frustration and rage over widening financial inequities in the American economy have been mounting for years. The richest 1% of Americans collected about 19% of pre-tax income in 2019, up from less than 11% four decades earlier, according to the World Inequality Database, run by Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, economists at the University of California, Berkeley, along with other researchers.

New York University economist Edward Wolff has found that the richest 10% of Americans own roughly 85% of stock wealth, a share that has grown steadily over time.

The financial crisis that ignited the Great Recession of 2007-2009 intensified resentment toward the bankers who had financed the dodgy loans behind the catastrophe and had ignored the obvious risks, only to receive bailouts from taxpayers and largely escape accountability. Rising outrage fueled the Occupy movement, in which protesters took over New York's Zuccotti Park and other public spaces and demanded far-reaching financial reforms that mainly didn't happen.

The coronavirus inflicted further pain, flattening the economy and causing more than 20 million Americans to lose jobs. This week, a report from the anti-poverty group Oxfam found that the world's 10 richest men have swollen their collective wealth by $500 billion since the pandemic erupted in March. In the meantime, nearly 10 million people who lost jobs to the pandemic remain unemployed.

The stock market, the chosen target of the Reddit day traders, has long stood as America's premier symbol of entrenched wealth. But technology, including forums like Reddit, has made it ever easier, faster and simpler for the aggrieved to mobilize, swap information and collectively plot strategy. And e-trading apps, notably Robinhood, allow amateur traders to buy commission-free stocks with one click.

They spotted a vulnerability in the market: The so-called short squeeze.

When hedge funds and other investors want to bet that a stock price will fall, they arrange a short sale: They borrow shares of, say, GameStop. Then they sell those borrowed shares, planning to buy back the stock later at a lower price and pocket the gain.

# Nation

# Trump parts with impeachment lawyers a week before trial

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Former President Donald Trump has parted ways with his lead impeachment lawyers just over a week before his Senate trial is set to begin, two people familiar with the situation said Saturday.

Butch Bowers and Deborah Barbier, both South Carolina lawyers, are no longer with Trump's defense team. One of the people described the parting as a "mutual decision" that reflected a difference of opinion on the direction of the case. Both insisted on anonymity to discuss private conversations.

One said new additions to the legal team were expected to be announced in a day or two.

The upheaval injects fresh uncertainty into the makeup and strategy of Trump's defense team as he prepares to face charges that he incited the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. However, all but five Senate Republicans this week voted in favor of an effort to dismiss the trial before it even started, making clear a conviction of the former president is unlikely regardless of his defense team.

Greg Harris and Johnny Gasser, two former federal prosecutors from South Carolina, are also off the team, one of the people said.

Trump has struggled to find attorneys willing to defend him after becoming the first president in history to be impeached twice. He is set to stand trial the week of Feb. 8 on a charge that he incited his supporters to storm Congress before President Joe Biden's inauguration in an attempt to halt the peaceful transition of power.

After numerous attorneys who defended him previously declined to take on the case, Trump was introduced to Bowers by one of his closest allies in the Senate, South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham.

Bowers, a familiar figure in Republican legal circles, had years of experience representing elected officials and political candidates, including then-South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford against a failed impeachment effort that morphed into an ethics probe.

Bowers and Barbier did not immediately return messages seeking comment Saturday evening.

Republicans and Trump aides have made clear that they intend to make a simple argument in the trial: Trump's trial is unconstitutional because he is no longer office.

While Republicans in Washington had seemed eager to part ways with Trump after the deadly events of Jan. 6, they have since eased off of their criticism, weary of angering the former president's loyal voter base.

CNN was first to report the departure of the lawyers.

AP

Former President Donald Trump passes supporters while traveling in his motorcade in West Palm Beach, Fla., on Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021, on his way to Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach.

## Biden, Democrats hit gas on push for $15 minimum wage

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—The Democratic push to raise the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour has emerged as an early flashpoint in the fight for a $1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package, testing President Joe Biden's ability to bridge Washington's partisan divides as he pursues his first major legislative victory.

Biden called for a $15 hourly minimum wage during his campaign and has followed through by hitching it to a measure that, among other things, calls for $1,400 stimulus checks and $130 billion to help schools reopen. Biden argues that anyone who holds a full-time job shouldn't live in poverty, echoing progressives in the Democratic Party who are fully on board with the effort.

"With the economic divide, I mean, I want to see a $15 minimum wage. It should actually be $20," said Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich.

Some Republicans support exploring an increase but are uneasy with $15 an hour. They warn that such an increase could lead to job losses in an economy that has nearly 10 million fewer jobs than it did before the pandemic began. Moderates such as Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Rep. Tom Reed of New York are urging Biden to split off the minimum wage hike from COVID-19 talks and deal with it separately.

"The more you throw into this bucket of COVID relief that's not really related to the crisis, the more you risk the credibility with the American people that you're really sincere about the crisis," Reed said. Including the wage increase, Murkowski said, "complicates politically an initiative that we should all be working together to address."

The resistance from moderates has left Democrats with a stark choice: Wait and build bipartisan support for an increase or move ahead with little to no GOP backing, potentially as part of a package that can pass the Senate with Vice President Kamala Harris' tiebreaking vote. Democratic leaders appear to be moving toward the latter option, with no guarantee of success. Even if raising the wage can get past procedural challenges, passage will require the support from every Democrat in the 50-50 Senate, which could be a tall order.

Leading the charge is Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., who unveiled $15 wage legislation this week with the backing of 37 Senate Democrats. His bill would gradually raise the wage to $15 over a period of five years. The federal minimum is $7.25 and has not been raised since 2009.

Sanders, the incoming chair of the Senate Budget Committee, said it was fine with him if Republicans were not prepared to "come on board." He said the government needed to pump money into the economy to make sure "people are not working on starvation wages."

Democrats are moving toward using a tool that allows certain budget-related items to bypass the Senate filibuster—a hurdle requiring 60 votes—and pass with a simple majority. Sanders is confident that a minimum wage increase fits within the allowed criteria for what is referred to in Washington lingo as budget reconciliation, though the Senate parliamentarian has final say on what qualifies.

## ACROSS THE NATION

### US pauses plan to give virus vaccine to Guantanamo prisoners

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—The U.S. is backing off for now on a plan to offer COVID-19 vaccinations to the 40 prisoners held at the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Pentagon chief spokesman John Kirby said in a tweet Saturday that the Defense Department would be "pausing" the plan to give the vaccination to those held at Guantanamo while it reviews measures to protect troops who work there. Kirby said no prisoners had yet received the vaccination. The plan drew some criticism after The New York Times reported that the vaccination of prisoners would start in the coming days. "We're pausing the plan to move forward, as we review force protection protocols," Kirby said. "We remain committed to our obligations to keep our troops safe." The U.S. military announced earlier this month that it planned to offer the vaccine to prisoners as it vaccinated all personnel at the detention center.

### South Carolina GOP censures Rep. Rice for impeachment vote

**COLUMBIA, S.C.** (AP)—South Carolina Republicans on Saturday issued a formal censure to U.S. Rep. Tom Rice to show disapproval over his vote in support of the second impeachment of former President Donald Trump. Rice was among 10 GOP representatives who joined Democrats on Jan. 13 in voting to impeach Trump for his role in the violence a week earlier at the U.S. Capitol. A Senate trial is expected in February. With two abstentions, Saturday's vote was 43-0. In a statement afterward, Rice vowed to help the Republican Party where he could but said he felt some in the GOP "have forgotten their very own creed, which states, 'I will never cower before any master, save my God.'" A day after his vote, Rice—who represents South Carolina's 7th District, an area that voted heavily for Trump—told The Associated Press "it hurts my heart" to have gone against the president, but he decided to back impeachment after seeing what he characterized as Trump's inaction during the Capitol Hill riot. Party committees across the country have moved to punish many of those 10 House Republicans who supported Trump's impeachment.

### Creator of 'Bernie' mittens partners with teddy bear maker

The teacher who created the recycled wool mittens that U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders wore to the presidential inauguration—engendering countless memes—is partnering with the Vermont Teddy Bear Company to create a whole mitten line to meet soaring demand, with some of the proceeds going to Make-A-Wish Vermont. "I can't be more thrilled, because I personally can't make 18,000 pairs of mittens," Jen Ellis said Saturday, estimating how many people have contacted her. "Everybody will get their mittens—everybody." Ellis, a Vermont elementary school teacher who has a side business making mittens out of recycled wool, gave Sanders a pair as a gift, and he wore them to President Joe Biden's inauguration. His fashion look, also featuring a winter jacket made by Burton Snowboards, sparked countless memes prompted by the photo taken by Agence France-Presse: The former presidential candidate could be found on social media timelines taking a seat on the subway, the moon and the couch with the cast of "Friends," among other creative locales. Sanders raised at least $1.8 million in merchandise for charities stemming from the Jan. 20 image of him seated with his arms and legs crossed, clad in his brown parka and the recycled wool mittens. Sanders put out so-called "Chairman Sanders" merchandise, including T-shirts, sweatshirts and stickers, on his campaign website. ***(AP)***

# Asia

## Myanmar military denies coup threats over vote fraud claims

**NAYPYITAW, Myanmar** (AP)—Myanmar's military on Saturday denied its chief was threatening to stage a coup over complaints of election fraud, saying the media had misinterpreted his words.

Political tension in the Southeast Asian nation soared this past week after a spokesman for the military, which had ruled Myanmar for five decades, said a coup could not be ruled out if its complaints of widespread fraud in November's election were ignored.

The commander-in-chief, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, told senior officers in a speech Wednesday that the constitution could be revoked if the laws were not being properly enforced. Adding to the concern was the unusual deployment of armored vehicles in the streets of several large cities.

Saturday's statement from the military, known as the Tatmadaw, said that "some organizations and media" wrote without foundation that the military threatened to revoke the constitution. The statement said Min Aung Hlaing's speech was taken out of context, and was actually an observation to senior officer trainees on the nature of the constitution.

The ruling National League for Democracy party captured 396 out of 476 seats in the Nov. 8 election, allowing it to form a government led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi for another five years. The military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party won only 33 seats.

The military has publicly complained several times of electoral fraud and called on the government and the Union Election Commission to review the results. It has said it has found 8.6 million irregularities in voter lists in 314 townships that could have let voters cast multiple ballots or commit other "voting malpractice."

The election commission said there was no evidence to support the fraud claims.

Parliament's new session is set to open Monday in the capital Naypyitaw.

The military ran Myanmar for some 50 years before beginning a transitioning to democracy in 2010. The current constitution ensures the country's generals maintain considerable influence in the country's affairs by guaranteeing them a quarter of the seats in parliament and control of a number of key ministries.

## China's big holiday travel season light so far

**BEIJING** (AP)—Efforts to dissuade Chinese from traveling for Lunar New Year appeared to be working as Beijing's main train station was largely quiet and estimates of passenger totals were smaller than in past years.

Thursday started the roughly two-week travel rush ahead of the holiday that falls this year on Feb. 12, a time when trains and other types of transportation are usually packed with migrant workers taking what may be their only chance each year to travel home and see family.

At the Beijing station, only about five of 15 security gates were open and the usual lines at ticket windows and passengers camped in the central plaza were nowhere to be seen.

Failure to restrict travel before the Lunar New Year travel period last year was blamed for the spread of the coronavirus, especially since the central city of Wuhan, where the first clusters of the illness were detected, is a key travel hub that was used by millions of passengers.

This year, authorities have offered free refunds on plane tickets and extra pay for workers who stay put to dissuade travel for the holiday.

Travelers must have a negative virus test within seven days of departure, and many local governments are ordering quarantines and other strict measures for travelers.

Officials are predicting Chinese will make 1.7 billion trips during the travel rush. That is down 40% from 2019. From some destinations, the declines could be much greater, with departures out of Beijing and the southwestern metropolis of Chengdu down by more than 75% over the period, according to estimates from travel associations.

International arrivals are similarly affected, with virtually all foreigners barred from entering China.

Meanwhile, a World Health Organization team emerged from quarantine in Wuhan on Thursday to start field work in a fact-finding mission on the origins of the virus.

The researchers were required to complete 14 days of quarantine after arriving in China. Their mission has become politically charged, as China seeks to avoid blame for alleged missteps in its early response to the outbreak.

The National Health Commission on Thursday reported 41 new cases of local transmission of the virus, a decline from previous days. China has reported 4,636 deaths from COVID-19 among 89,326 total cases.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

■ The Philippines' top diplomat said Thursday he will go into quarantine and the entire Department of Foreign Affairs headquarters in Manila will be shut down for five days after some personnel tested positive for COVID-19. Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said he tested negative for the coronavirus but was exposed Wednesday to people who turned out to be infected. "We're going into lockdown til Tuesday when we test again," Locsin said in a tweet, without elaborating. The department said in a separate statement that its closure, which starts Friday, could be extended depending on the result of a health assessment. The Philippines has nearly 520,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases, the second-highest number in Southeast Asia after Indonesia, and 10,552 deaths. The government has been negotiating with seven American, European and Asian companies to purchase 148 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, with the first small batches expected to be delivered next month.

■ More than 90 million doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine for COVID-19 will be produced in Japan by a Japanese pharmaceutical company under a licensing agreement, officials said Thursday. The production will cover three quarters of the 120 million doses the British pharmaceutical company has pledged to supply to the country, Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato said. "It is very important to establish vaccine production system in the country," he said. The licensing agreement is with JCR Pharmaceuticals Co. Japanese officials are scrambling to prepare for inoculations to start as early as late February. Japan says it has secured enough vaccines for more than its population of 127 million from three suppliers—AstraZeneca, Pfizer Inc., and Moderna Inc. Many believe vaccinations are key for Japan to hold the postponed Olympics this summer. Japan has reported 375,607 cases and 5,361 deaths as of Wednesday.

# World

## Russia warn Navalny supporters not to attend protests on Sunday

**MOSCOW** (AP)—Russian police have issued a strong warning against participating in protests planned for Sunday to call for the release of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny, the Kremlin's most prominent foe.

The warning comes amid detentions of Navalny associates and opposition journalists and a police plan to restrict movement in the center of Moscow on Sunday.

AP

Russian Rosguardia (National Guard) soldiers stand blocking enter to the Palace Square a day before Sunday's protest in St. Petersburg, Russia, Saturday, Jan. 30, 2021.

Navalny was arrested on Jan. 17 after flying back to Russia from Germany, where he had spent five months recovering from nerve-agent poisoning. His detention sparked nationwide protests one week ago in about 100 cities; nearly 4,000 people were reported arrested.

The next demonstration in Moscow is planned for Lubyanka Square. The Federal Security Service, which Navalny claims arrange to have him poisoned with a Soviet-era nerve agent on behalf of the Kremlin, is headquartered in the square. The Russian government has denied a role in the 44-year-old's poisoning.

The city police department said much of central Moscow from Red Square to Lubyanka would have pedestrian restrictions and that seven subway stations in the vicinity would be closed on Sunday. Restaurants in the area also are to be closed, and the iconic GUM department store on Red Square said it would open only in the evening.

Russian Interior Ministry spokeswoman Irina Volk cited the coronavirus pandemic in a Saturday warning against protests. She said participants found in violation of epidemiological regulations could face criminal charges.

The Jan. 23 protests in support of Navalny were the largest and most widespread seen in Russia in many years, and authorities sought to prevent a repeat. Police conducted a series of raids this week at apartments and offices of Navalny's family, associates and anti-corruption organization.

His brother Oleg, top aide Lyubov Sobol and three other people were put under two-month house arrest on Friday, as part of a criminal probe into alleged violations of coronavirus regulations during last weekend's protests.

Sergei Smirnov, editor of the Mediazona news site that was founded by members of the Pussy Riot punk collective, was detained by police upon leaving his home on Saturday. No charges against him were announced.

Navalny fell into a coma on Aug. 20 while on a domestic flight from Siberia to Moscow. He was transferred to a Berlin hospital two days later. Labs in Germany, France and Sweden, and tests by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, established that he was exposed to the Novichok nerve agent.

### WORLD BRIEFS

#### United Arab Emirates says it will offer citizenship to some

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates** (AP)—The United Arab Emirates on Saturday announced plans to grant some foreigners citizenship to this oil-rich nation home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, part of efforts to stimulate its economy amid the coronavirus pandemic. The UAE previously gave citizenship to Palestinians and others who helped form the country's government after its formation in 1971. Others have received it over time as well. Saturday's announcement by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai who also serves as the autocratic nation's prime minister and vice president, said the offer could apply to artists, authors, doctors, engineers and scientists, as well as their families. Sheikh Mohammed wrote on Twitter that hereditary rulers in the country's seven emirates and at the federal level would nominate those for citizenship. Those granted citizenship also would be able to keep their initial citizenship. It wasn't immediately clear if the citizenship also would grant rights to the UAE's cradle-to-grave social programs for its nationals. The UAE is home to over 9 million people, only a tenth of them citizens. In November, the UAE announced plans to overhaul the country's Islamic personal laws, allowing unmarried couples to cohabitate, loosening alcohol restrictions and criminalizing so-called "honor killings."

#### Mexico confirms at least 2 Guatemalan migrants among 19 dead

**MEXICO CITY** (AP)—Prosecutors in northern Mexico confirmed Saturday that at least two of the 19 people found shot to death and burned near the U.S. border were Guatemalan migrants. Two other victims among the four identified so far were Mexicans, they said. The forensic results confirmed the fears of families in a rural Indigenous farming community in Guatemala who have said they lost contact with 13 migrants last week as they travelled toward the United States. The bodies were found Jan. 22 piled in a burned-out truck on a dirt road in the northern border state of Tamaulipas. The truck had 113 bullet impacts. A burned-out SUV found nearby had previously been seen in the neighboring state of Nuevo Leon, at a spot where 66 migrants were caught by police and immigration agents. The Tamaulipas state prosecutors' office did not release the names of the four victims identified so far. Of the 19 bodies examined by experts, 16 were found to be males, one was confirmed as female and two others were so badly burned their gender had not yet been determined.

# Health & Wellness

This advertorial is sponsored by Tan Holdings HEALTH IS WEALTH Tan Siu Lin Foundation

**COOLING STRESS TIPS**

# Ask the **right questions** to get the **right answers**

DREAMSTIME/TNS

Ask yourself: What do I actually have the power to change? For example, you can stop dwelling on people who hurt you years ago. Or, you can ask yourself how you can improve your daily schedule.

By JUDI LIGHT HOPSON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Are you lost trying to fix some of your stress issues? You might wonder: What needs to change? Can anything be changed? Am I stuck?

If you ask the right questions, you will discover some solutions. You will bring your world into focus.

Questions are powerful. They reveal more about each stressful situation. For example, you might ask, "Do I hate my job itself, or do I simply dislike my supervisor? Is my marriage in trouble, or am I failing to fix my own true problems?"

Most of us can benefit through some soul searching. We can, in a real sense, interview ourselves.

For example, it's important to constantly ask: What's going well in my life? What relationships are working? What is productive?

These tips can help you choose questions that can turn things around:

■ Ask yourself: What good choices have I made throughout life? This might include eating healthy, exercising faithfully, or remembering birthdays of friends and family.

■ Ask yourself: What do I actually have the power to change? For example, you can stop dwelling on people who hurt you years ago. Or, you can ask yourself how you can improve your daily schedule.

A restaurant owner we'll call Becky was on the verge of divorcing her husband this past summer. Becky decided to ask him a few questions first.

"My husband was always angry and wouldn't go anywhere with me," says Becky. "When I thoughtfully asked him a few health questions, he decided he needed to tell me about his chest pain."

Becky's husband, as it turned out, needed open heart surgery. He had bypass surgery in October 2020.

"His migraines are gone, and his chest pain is gone," says Becky. "No wonder he was cranky and not in the mood to socialize."

A bank teller we'll call Dionne recently asked herself, "How can I finish college?" Dionne is 47 and vows she can't be happy until she finishes her degree.

"I sat down by myself one Sunday afternoon," she explains. "I asked myself how I could take just a single class. I asked myself how I could make time to continue, taking just one or two classes per semester. My goal is to finish 60 credits. Then, I'll figure out the rest."

Most of us, when we pursue a goal, have to ask: How will I find time to do this? What must I neglect in order to reach my goal?

A policeman we'll call Barry says he asked himself a big question a few months ago. "I asked myself which diet and exercise program would work for me," he says. "I wanted to lose 30 pounds."

Barry talked with several weight loss experts. He was told to count calories, watch his sugar intake, cut back on carbohydrates, buy protein drinks, enroll in a weight loss class, etc.

"Finally," Barry says, "I had to trust myself. Which diet would I stick with? The exercise was a matter of spending an hour in the gym every other day.

"I decided to cut my eating portions by 25 percent," he explains. "I eat anything I want. I just don't eat as much. Funny thing is, I eat slower, I really taste my food, and I get filled up!"

He reports losing seven pounds the first two weeks.

"Asking a clear, simple question will open your mind to what will suit you," he summarizes. "Trust your own sense of self. You know what you can and can't do. You know what will and won't work for you. I lost the entire thirty pounds in four months."

*Judi Light Hopson is author of the stress management book, "Cooling Stress Tips." She is also executive director of USA Wellness Cafe at www.usawellnesscafe.org.*

# **Mayo Clinic Q and A:** Hot yoga for weight loss and overall health

**DEAR MAYO CLINIC: A friend of mine started doing yoga a few months ago and said after two classes a week, she has become stronger and lost weight. I want to lose weight, too, and my blood pressure is high, so my friend suggested I join her for a hot yoga class. I'm not familiar with yoga, so I am wondering if it's safe for me to do. Also, will heated classes help me?**

**ANSWER:** Yoga is a mind-body practice that combines physical poses, controlled breathing, and meditation or relaxation. Yoga may reduce stress and anxiety, lower blood pressure, and lower your heart rate.

There are many styles, forms and intensities of yoga. Hatha is one of the most common styles of yoga, and beginners may like its slower pace and easier movements. Prenatal yoga has been reported to help women prepare for labor and might even promote the baby's health. For animal lovers, there are even goat yoga classes.

Hot yoga is a vigorous form of yoga performed in a very warm, humid studio. During the Bikram form of hot yoga, the room is heated to approximately 105 F (40 C) and has a humidity of 40%.

Regardless of the type of yoga you choose, the core components of most general yoga classes include various poses designed to increase strength and flexibility, and controlled breathing to quiet the mind and improve awareness.

The practice of yoga can improve your health. Potential health benefits include:

Stress reduction. A number of studies have shown that yoga may reduce stress and anxiety. It also can enhance your mood and overall sense of well-being.

Improved fitness. Practicing yoga may lead to improved balance, flexibility, range of motion and strength.

Management of chronic conditions. Yoga can help reduce risk factors for chronic diseases, such as heart disease and high blood pressure. Yoga also might help alleviate chronic conditions, such as depression, pain, anxiety and insomnia.

There are many styles, forms and intensities of yoga.

Specifically regarding hot yoga, the challenge comes from both the temperature of the studio and the intensity of the different standing and stretching postures. The postures require lengthy, forceful and sustained contractions of all major muscle groups. The demanding nature of the poses and the heat are designed to raise your heart rate and exercise your muscles.

Although you may sweat more during hot yoga, the research is ongoing regarding its effects on body fat and heart health. In general, yoga may be a useful addition to an overall weight-loss plan that includes regular aerobic exercise and a healthy diet. Although yoga is not considered a high-intensity workout in terms of burning calories, it is a great way to get more physically fit and certainly has benefits such as mindfulness, which can help with managing and sticking to your diet.

While yoga can quiet the mind and body, which leads to relaxation and less stress, the intensity of the hot yoga workout and the high temperatures could cause other issues. Although most people can perform hot yoga, there is an increased risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion or heat stroke. If you have any concerns or underlying health conditions, it's always best to consult your health care provider before starting a new exercise routine such as hot yoga.

You will want to drink plenty of water before, during and after the workout. Also, be aware of the signs of heat-related illnesses. If you feel lightheaded, dizzy or in any way sick, stop immediately and seek medical attention.

It's probably best to skip hot yoga if you have heart disease or a history of heat-related illness such as heatstroke or dehydration.

Yoga can be a valuable practice for your overall health and well-being, but as every person has a different body with different abilities, you may need to modify yoga postures based on your abilities. Your instructor should be able to suggest modified poses.

Regardless of which type of yoga you practice, you don't have to do every pose. If a pose is uncomfortable or you can't hold it as long as the instructor requests, don't do it. Good instructors will understand and encourage you to explore but not exceed your personal limits.

Try different classes and find what feels good to you. You also will want to find an instructor that you can connect with. It is important to choose an instructor who is experienced and understands your needs. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

# Life & Style

## Cicely Tyson, purposeful and pioneering actor, dead at 96

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Cicely Tyson, the pioneering Black actor who gained an Oscar nomination for her role as the sharecropper's wife in "Sounder," won a Tony Award in 2013 at age 88 and touched TV viewers' hearts in "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," died Thursday at age 96.

Tyson's death was announced by her family, via her manager Larry Thompson, who did not immediately provide additional details.

"With heavy heart, the family of Miss Cicely Tyson announces her peaceful transition this afternoon. At this time, please allow the family their privacy," according to a statement issued through Thompson.

A onetime model, Tyson began her screen career with bit parts but gained fame in the early 1970s when Black women were finally starting to get starring roles. Tyson refused to take parts simply for the paycheck, remaining choosey.

"I'm very selective as I've been my whole career about what I do. Unfortunately, I'm not the kind of person who works only for money. It has to have some real substance for me to do it," she told The Associated Press in 2013.

Tributes from two former presidents and from across the worlds of Hollywood and Broadway poured in, with many praising her careful approach to her career and activism. "She took pride in knowing that whenever her face was on camera, she would be playing a character who was a human being—flawed but resilient; perfect not despite but because of their imperfections," wrote former President Barack Obama, who awarded Tyson the Medal of Freedom in 2016.

Former President Bill Clinton wrote online that Tyson "brought complex characters to life with dignity and heart, and humanity and depth, always remaining true to herself." "She used her career to illuminate the humanity in Black people. The roles she played reflected her values," wrote Oprah Winfrey.

Tyson's memoir, "Just As I Am," was published this week.

Besides her Oscar nomination, she won two Emmys for playing the 110-year-old former slave in the 1974 television drama "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman." A new generation of moviegoers saw her in the 2011 hit "The Help."

In 2018, she was given an honorary Oscar statuette at the annual Governors Awards. "I come from lowly status. I grew up in an area that was called the slums at the time," Tyson said at the time. "I still cannot imagine that I have met with presidents, kings, queens. How did I get here? I marvel at it."

Writing in "Blacks in American Film and Television," Donald Bogle described Tyson as "a striking figure: slender and intense with near-perfect bone structure, magnificent

**Tyson**

smooth skin, dark penetrating eyes, and a regal air that made her seem a woman of convictions and commitment. (Audiences) sensed... her power and range."

"Sounder," based on the William H. Armstrong novel, was the film that confirmed her stardom in 1972. Tyson was cast as the Depression-era loving wife of a sharecropper (Paul Winfield) who is confined in jail for stealing a piece of meat for his family. She is forced to care for their children and attend to the crops.

The New York Times reviewer wrote: "She passes all of her easy beauty by to give us, at long last, some sense of the profound beauty of millions of Black women."

Her performance evoked rave reviews, and Tyson won an Academy Award nomination as best actress of 1972.

In an interview on the Turner Classic Movies cable channel, she recalled that she had been asked to test for a smaller role in the film and said she wanted to play the mother, Rebecca. She was told, "You're too young, you're too pretty, you're too sexy, you're too this, you're too that, and I said, `I am an actress.'"

In 2013, at the age of 88, Tyson won the Tony for best leading actress in a play for the revival of Horton Foote's "The Trip to Bountiful." It was the actor's first time back on Broadway in three decades and she refused to turn meekly away when the teleprompter told to finish her acceptance speech.

"`Please wrap it up,' it says. Well, that's exactly what you did with me: You wrapped me up in your arms after 30 years," she told the crowd. She had prepared no speech ("I think it's presumptuous," she told the AP later. "I burned up half my time wondering what I was going to say.")

She reprised her winning role in the play for a Lifetime Television movie, which was screened at the White House. She returned to Broadway in 2015 opposite James Earl Jones for a revival of "The Gin Game."

Her fame transcended all media. Apple CEO Tim Cook took to Twitter to praise Tyson as a "pioneer with purpose. Cicely Tyson's talent redefined theater, film and television. Her courage, resilience and grace changed the entertainment landscape for generations to come." Rihanna called her "a true legend." Neil deGrasse Tyson called her "a force of nature unto herself" and Shonda Rhimes said "her power and grace will be with us forever."

## *Cicely Tyson paved way for Black actors to follow footsteps*

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Cicely Tyson was a Black actor who knocked down doors so other women of color could walk through them.

Tyson strategically selected powerful roles with an intent to elevate how Black actors were perceived. With dignified grace, she starred in films such as "Sounder" and on TV with "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman." She strived to shatter stereotypes and inspired many Black actresses along the way to follow her footsteps. A younger generation of Black actors—Viola Davis, Kerry Washington and Zendaya among them—all paid homage to Tyson after learning of her death at age 96 on Thursday.

Davis said Tyson made her feel "valued in a world where there is still a cloak of invisibility for us dark chocolate girls." Washington felt Tyson was a "foretaste of glory," while Zendaya, who made Emmy history last year as the youngest lead drama actress winner, called the actor "one of the greatest to ever do it."

"Thank you for kicking doors down for girls like me," actor Tika Sumpter said.

Tyson's death was announced by her family, via her manager Larry Thompson, who did not immediately provide additional details. The actor's passing comes just a few days after the release of her memoir "Just As I Am."

A onetime model, Tyson began her screen career with bit parts but gained fame in the early 1970s when Black women were finally starting to get starring roles. Tyson refused to take parts simply for the paycheck, remaining choosey.

Tyson desired to get away from the negative portrayals of Black women with the hopes of highlighting them with powerful prestige.

"Cicely decided early on that her work as an actor would be more than a job," Oprah Winfrey said in a statement. "She used her career to illuminate the humanity in Black people. The roles she played reflected her values; she never compromised. Her life so fully lived is a testimony to Greatness."

Gayle King, who interviewed Tyson last week, said the actor was still full of life. She said Tyson expressed that she had more to offer with a desire to direct a project in the future.

"This was not a doddering old lady that I've heard many older people say, 'You know what? I'm just tired. I'm just tired. I'm ready to go. I'm done. I'm just tired,'" King said. "That was not Cicely Tyson. She was talking about her desire to direct. She said, 'I may have something to share later on.'"

Tyson earned an Oscar nomination for her role in "Sounder," where she played a Depression-era loving wife of a sharecropper who is confined in jail for stealing a piece of meat for his family. She is forced to care for their children and attend to the crops.

## Couple feels cast adrift after friend's diagnosis

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have dear friends, one of whom has been diagnosed with untreatable cancer. The doctors told him to go home and maximize his quality of life. The first step he took was to completely cut us out.

We had been friends for years. They watched the big football games with us at our house. When he was diagnosed, I was the first person outside of his family he called. They stood up with us when we renewed our vows. I have cut cords of firewood for them. We traveled together.

Recently, the wife posted on Facebook that when undergoing trials you find out who your friends really are. We have been tossed aside like worn-out shoes.

My question is, when he passes, if we learn about it, would it be appropriate to attend the funeral to say goodbye to this man we dearly love and offer our condolences to the widow?

ALREADY BEREAVED IN KANSAS

**DEAR ALREADY BEREAVED: Everyone reacts differently after receiving a diagnosis like the one your friend received. Some people reach out for support, but a sizable number do the opposite. They "circle the wagons," which may be what this man has done.**

**It would be interesting to know if his wife was aware of the message you were given, because from what she posted, she may not have been. I think it is time to reach out to her privately and ask her how you can be supportive -- if only to her. And yes, when he passes you should pay your respects and offer condolences. Funerals are for the living.**

**DEAR ABBY:** For the past few months I've been seeing a gentleman in his late 50s who lost his last girlfriend, "Vera," in a tragic accident. Her death was less than a year ago and he is still grieving, which I respect and am not uncomfortable with. My beau has low self-esteem. He thinks the relationship he had with Vera made him a better person, and that without her he will be less so.

I understand his sorrow and that he needs more time to sort through his feelings but, if things work out with us, and we continue to see each other, I want to know how I can also make him feel like I'm helping him be a better person. He says it was "just the relationship they had" and that he doesn't know how to put it into words.

I don't want to replace Vera or copy her, but I do wish I could understand what she did to help him believe positive things about himself.

NEW GIRLFRIEND IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

**DEAR GIRLFRIEND: In order to understand that, it would be helpful to see if he can explain the reason for his low self-esteem. Was it hypercritical parents? Difficulty fitting in with peers that started when he was in school? Not receiving enough positive feedback in his youth?**

**Once you gain more insight, you may be able to find the answers you are looking for. Both partners in a relationship should use whatever attributes they have to make EACH OTHER feel positive. However, please recognize it should not be your responsibility to prop him up on a continuing basis.**

*For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)*

### DEAR ABBY

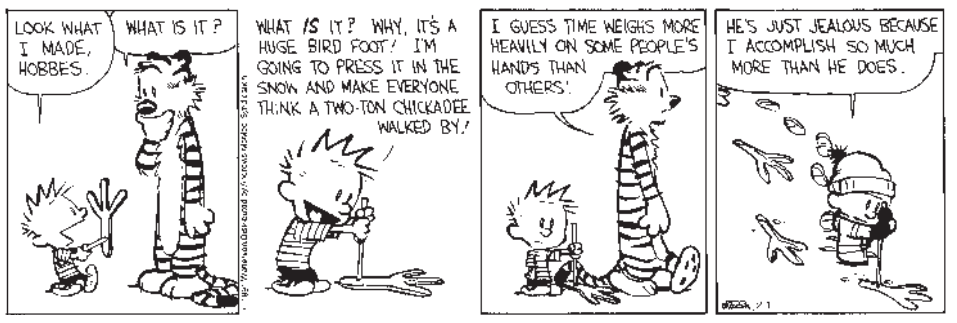
**By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


LOOK WHAT I MADE, HOBBES.
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT IS IT? WHY, IT'S A HUGE BIRD FOOT! I'M GOING TO PRESS IT IN THE SNOW AND MAKE EVERYONE THINK A TWO-TON CHICKADEE WALKED BY.
I GUESS TIME WEIGHS MORE HEAVILY ON SOME PEOPLE'S HANDS THAN OTHERS.
HE'S JUST JEALOUS BECAUSE I ACCOMPLISH SO MUCH MORE THAN HE DOES.

## Garfield®

By Jim Davis

## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WHAT'S UP WITH MOM'S BOOK?
HER AGENT IS TRYING TO SELL IT.
OH. SO, THAT COULD TAKE A WHILE. RIGHT?
2-1
YES. WHY?
I HAVE A WHOLE PONY STORYLINE I THOUGHT WE COULD..
AW, DANG! WOULD YOU LOOK AT THE TIME!

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

I'M CONFIDENT THAT THE NEXT FOUR YEARS WILL BRING ABOUT A NEW ERA OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION.
HA! HAW HAW HA!
SORRY, I TRIED TO HOLD THAT IN.!

## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

**ACROSS**
1 Scurry
5 Prohibit
8 Rhyming tributes
12 Texas city
14 Swampy terrain
15 Nolan Ryan specialty
16 Mideast ruler
17 Faux —
18 California motto
20 Thread holder
23 Expansive
24 Slightly
25 Sentra and Maxima
28 Nursery cry
29 Engine
30 Squeak stopper
32 "Absolutely!"
34 Continental currency
35 Tennis great Arthur
36 Wing
37 Singer Kitt
40 "Do — say!"
41 Yard fraction
42 "Don't worry about it"
47 Casserole base
48 Butter producer
49 Baseball's Musial
50 Snaky fish
51 Sheltered

**DOWN**
1 Dapper fellow
2 Latin 101 word
3 Fan's shout
4 Camera stand, often
5 Diner orders
6 Pub pint
7 "Just because"
8 Mobster's code of silence
9 It ain't worth a nickel
10 Composer Satie
11 Antitoxins
13 Slanted type (Abbr.)
19 Cold War initials
20 Cutting tool
21 School orgs.
22 Honolulu's isle
23 Curriculum —
25 "Impossible!"
26 Subject, usually
27 Beget
29 Screen material
31 Bagel topper
33 Wicker material
34 Puzzle
36 Europe's neighbor
37 New newts
38 Summer month in Paris
39 Barrett or Jaffe
40 First victim
43 Miner's find
44 Solidify
45 Rage
46 CBS logo

Solution time: 26 mins.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | I | N | ■ | P | A | R | A | ■ | M | A | A | M |
| J | S | E | ■ | E | L | A | N | ■ | A | W | R | Y |
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| ■ | ■ | S | A | R | A | ■ | ■ | M | I | S | T | Y |
| P | J | P | I | L | ■ | M | R | I | S | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| O | R | E | L | ■ | P | E | E | K | A | B | O | O |
| J | S | A | ■ | A | E | T | N | A | ■ | R | K | O |
| I | A | K | E | C | A | H | E | ■ | H | A | R | P |
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| S | E | R | F | S | ■ | ■ | C | O | E | D | ■ | ■ |
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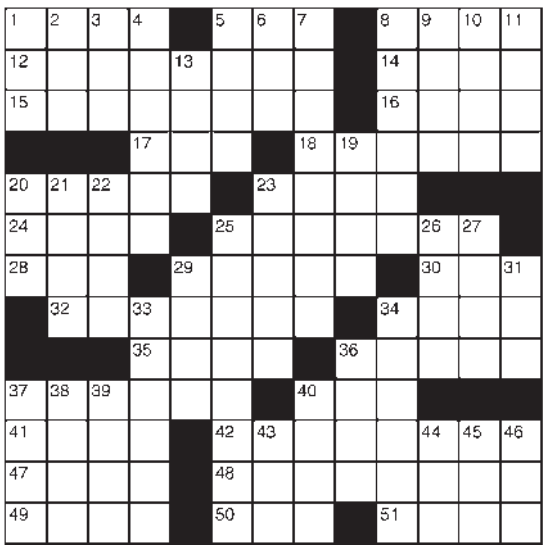
Last Friday's Answer 02/01



**STUMPED?** For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Harry Styles, 27; Ronda Rousey, 34; Big Boi, 46; Michael C. Hall, 50.

**Happy Birthday:** Take the initiative when it comes to money matters, and you will enjoy less stress and greater control over your life. Update contracts, documents and investments to suit your long-term plans. Be open, receptive and curious regarding your options, and the year will unfold to your liking. Romance is on the rise, and progress is achievable. Your numbers are 5, 12, 19, 26, 32, 38, 47.

**ARIES** *(March 21-April 19):* Send out your resume, apply for a job or a promotion. You'll make a good impression. A positive change is heading your way. Avoid letting unfinished business stop you from reaching your objective. Be responsible. ✪✪✪

**TAURUS** *(April 20-May 20):* Keep moving forward, let your intuition guide you and choose to use charm instead of force to get what you want. Take the time to help others, and you will impress someone influential. A personal improvement will fetch compliments as well as jealousy. ✪✪✪

**GEMINI** *(May 21-June 20):* Embrace the future with optimism. Call out to people who can offer inside information and suggestions regarding what's trending and where you can find the best opportunities. Personal growth, knowledge and peace of mind will highlight your day. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

**CANCER** *(June 21-July 22):* Concentrate on what you want to achieve. Gather information and consider the cost before you begin, and you'll find a way to streamline your plans to fit your budget. Don't let emotional matters escalate. A rational, practical attitude will encourage you to excel. ✪✪

**LEO** *(July 23-Aug. 22):* The way you handle partnerships will determine how well you do. Opportunity is within reach, but so is interference and poor judgment. Listen carefully, don't rush into anything and spend time on self-improvement, not trying to change others. ✪✪✪✪

**VIRGO** *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Information will come your way. Consider your options, and choose to take action. A responsible attitude will lead to an opportunity that will help boost your earning potential. Learn from the past, and proceed with confidence. Update your image. ✪✪✪

**LIBRA** *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Consider the changes you want to make, and set a realistic budget. If you overspend, you will add undue stress to your life. Know your capabilities, stick to a plan and use your home base functionally. Personal gain is within reach. ✪✪✪✪

**SCORPIO** *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Be secretive. Put everything in place, look for potential problems, find solutions and don't make a move or change until the coast is clear to do so without opposition. Bide your time and protect your assets, health and financial future. ✪✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Do what comes naturally. You won't be disappointed if you don't depend on others. Use your skills to get ahead professionally, financially and personally. Fact-check information others share with you before you pass it along. Romance is featured. ✪✪

**CAPRICORN** *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Stay on top of your responsibilities. Get things done on time, and refuse to let emotional matters spin out of control. Have a backup plan in place, be ready to act quickly and don't jeopardize your health. ✪✪✪✪✪

**AQUARIUS** *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Focus on what you can do, not what you can't. Don't let the changes others put in place disrupt your plans. Arguing is a waste of time, so put a smile on your face and embrace positive alternatives. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪✪

**PISCES** *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Call in favors, and you'll receive the assistance required to get the results you desire. Make the first move and adapt when necessary. Don't lose sight of your goal because of what someone else is doing. Stay focused and well-informed. ✪✪✪

**Birthday Baby:** You are curious, playful and changeable. You are appealing and entertaining.

**1 star:** *Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes.* **2 stars:** *You can accomplish, but don't rely on others.* **3 stars:** *Focus and you'll reach your goals.* **4 stars:** *Aim high; start new projects.* **5 stars:** *Nothing can stop you; go for gold.*

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## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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## SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2 | 3 | | | | | | |
| | | | | 4 | | 1 | | 7 |
| | 7 | | 9 | | 1 | | | 8 |
| | | 7 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 9 | | |
| | 4 | | | 9 | | | 2 | |
| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 7 | | |
| 6 | | | 2 | | 9 | | 7 | |
| 7 | | 4 | | 6 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 5 | 1 | |

Difficulty Level ★ 2/01

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| 7 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| 4 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 7 |
| 9 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 2 |
| 6 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 9 |
| 5 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 1 |
| 3 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 5 |
| 1 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 6 |

Difficulty Level ★★★★

## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

LET'S GO FISHING — Solution: 5 letters

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | S | K | T | C | E | S | N | I | R | E | K | C | U | S |
| S | T | T | C | C | H | A | R | T | E | R | S | R | B | W |
| W | M | U | N | O | T | S | M | E | L | T | P | O | O | H |
| H | S | A | R | I | D | U | S | C | G | O | A | R | T | C |
| I | D | E | L | G | O | N | O | A | N | T | M | O | S | A |
| T | N | E | L | L | E | P | E | R | A | S | B | R | L | N |
| E | A | E | N | C | M | O | Y | P | T | Ⓡ | Ⓔ | Ⓔ | Ⓛ | O |
| F | L | E | I | R | Y | O | N | A | U | R | P | T | I | E |
| I | T | L | T | E | K | C | U | B | W | I | T | A | G | C |
| S | E | S | L | G | B | A | I | T | C | V | S | W | R | S |
| H | W | L | O | U | K | L | S | K | H | E | R | U | N | P |
| N | O | M | L | A | S | U | E | E | S | R | I | I | E | E |
| W | S | U | N | S | C | R | E | E | N | S | F | S | K | R |
| D | A | E | H | L | E | E | T | S | E | I | A | A | I | C |
| C | A | N | A | L | S | D | S | R | A | G | L | B | P | H |

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**Last Friday's Answer: Garlic**

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# Davis returns to help Lakers beat Celtics

**BOSTON** (AP)— Anthony Davis had 27 points and 14 rebounds in his return to the lineup and the Los Angeles Lakers hung on to beat the Boston Celtics 96-95 on Saturday night when Daniel Theis missed a follow shot at the buzzer.

LeBron James finished with 21 points, seven rebounds and seven assists in the first meeting of the season between the longtime rivals. Montrezl Harrell added 16 points for the Lakers, who lost in Detroit on Thursday when Davis rested a bruised right quadriceps.

Jayson Tatum finished with 30 points and nine rebounds for the Celtics. Jaylen Brown added 28 points. Boston has lost five out of its last seven.

The Celtics played the final 10:28 of the game without Marcus Smart, who was helped off the court with what the team said was a left calf strain following a collision with Harrell underneath the basket. Harrell tipped in a missed layup and stepped on Smart's foot as he came down.

Smart crumpled to the court. He was helped to his feet but couldn't put any pressure on his leg as trainers carried him to the locker room.

The Lakers surged following the injury. James broke an 85-all tie with a 3-pointer with 5:25 to play.

The lead grew as high as 96-89. But a pair of free throws by Kemba Walker, a jumper by Tatum and turnover by James gave the Celtics life with 39 seconds remaining.

Boston got the ball out of a timeout to Tatum, who got a floater to go in to cut the deficit to 96-95 and set up the final exchange. Walker knocked away Davis' jumper and then missed a jumper on the other end. Theis swooped in but couldn't get the follow to fall.

Smart's injury was the latest blow to a Boston lineup that was playing with its projected starting lineup of Smart, Walker, Tatum, Brown and Theis for just the second time this season. Walker missed the first 12 games of the season recovering from a procedure on his left knee and Tatum missed multiple games earlier this month with COVID-19.

AP
Los Angeles Lakers' Anthony Davis (3) shoots between Boston Celtics' Jaylen Brown (7) and Jayson Tatum during the first half of an NBA game Saturday, Jan. 30, 2021, in Boston.

### Trail Blazers 123, Bulls 122

In Chicago, Damian Lillard hit a fadeaway 3-pointer as time expired to lift Portland past the Bulls.

Lillard finished with 44 points on eight 3-pointers.

It appeared the Bulls had the game in control after Coby White hit a pair of free throws to give them a 122-117 lead with 11.5 seconds left. Lillard came down and hit a 3-pointer with 8.2 seconds to play.

Following the inbounds, the Blazers trapped Zach LaVine in the corner and forced a jump ball with 6.2 seconds left. After the jump, Lillard picked up the loose ball and fired a 3 from near the sideline to win it.

### Hornets 126, Bucks 114

In Charlotte, LaMelo Ball scored a career-high 27 points and had nine assists and the Hornets handed Milwaukee its second loss in two nights.

Gordon Hayward added 27 points, Malik Monk had 18 and Cody Zeller chipped in with a career-best 15 rebounds.

Giannis Antetokounmpo nearly had a triple-double, finishing with 34 points, 18 rebounds and nine assists for the Bucks.

### Heat 105, Kings 104

In Miami, Jimmy Butler scored a season-high 30 points after missing 10 games because of the NBA's virus-related protocols, including the go-ahead layup with 42.1 seconds left, and the Heat beat Sacramento to end a five-game losing streak.

Sacramento had a last-ditch chance, but Richaun Holmes' jumper was well short.

Bam Adebayo had 18 points and 13 rebounds for Miami. De'Aaron Fox scored 30 points for Sacramento.

### Suns 111, Mavericks 105

In Dallas, Chris Paul had 27 points and 12 assists and Phoenix rallied to beat the Mavericks.

Deandre Ayton had 18 points and 17 rebounds for the Suns, who trailed by 15 in the second half. Mikal Bridges and Jae Crowder each scored 14 points.

Dallas wasted a terrific performance by Luka Doncic, who scored 18 of his 29 points in the third quarter, including eight straight in a 12-0 run after the teams were tied at halftime. The Mavericks dropped their fifth consecutive game.

### Rockets 126, Pelicans 112

In New Orleans, Christian Wood scored 27 points and Houston beat the Pelicans to run its winning streak to five.

Victor Oladipo scored 20 points and John Wall added 15 for Houston.

Zion Williamson had 26 points for the Pelicans.

### Grizzlies 129, Spurs 112

In San Antonio, Ja Morant had 19 points and 11 assists and Memphis beat the Spurs for its sixth straight victory.

De'Anthony Melton had 20 points, and former Spurs forward Kyle Anderson finished with 16. Reserves Gorgui Dieng and Desmond Bane added 15 points apiece.

The teams remain in San Antonio for the finale of a two-game set Monday.

### Warriors 118, Pistons 91

In San Francisco, Stephen Curry scored 28 points, knocking down six 3-pointers, and the Golden State Warriors raced to an early lead on the way to arout of the Detroit Pistons.

Kelly Oubre Jr. added 18 points as the Warriors executed the way coach Steve Kerr has hoped for on both ends. Now, they must strive to do it consistently and against the NBA's top-tier teams.

Curry shot 11 for 17, including 6 of 8 from deep, and Golden State found a far better offensive groove after shooting just 38% in Thursday's 114-93 loss at Phoenix.

## TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

### NBA STANDINGS

**EASTERN DIVISION**

**Atlantic**

| | W | L | PCT | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Philadelphia | 14 | 6 | .700 | 0.0 |
| Brooklyn | 13 | 8 | .619 | 1.5 |
| Boston | 10 | 8 | .556 | 3.0 |
| New York | 9 | 11 | .450 | 5.0 |
| Toronto | 7 | 12 | .368 | 6.5 |

**Central**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Milwaukee | 11 | 8 | .579 | 0.0 |
| Indiana | 11 | 8 | .579 | 0.0 |
| Cleveland | 9 | 10 | .474 | 2.0 |
| Chicago | 7 | 11 | .389 | 3.5 |
| Detroit | 5 | 15 | .250 | 6.5 |

**Southeast**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Atlanta | 10 | 9 | .526 | 0.0 |
| Charlotte | 9 | 11 | .450 | 1.5 |
| Orlando | 8 | 12 | .400 | 2.5 |
| Miami | 7 | 12 | .368 | 3.0 |
| Washington | 3 | 12 | .200 | 5.0 |

**WESTEN CONFERENCE**

**Pacific**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| LA Clippers | 15 | 5 | .750 | 0.0 |
| LA Lakers | 15 | 6 | .714 | 0.5 |
| Phoenix | 10 | 8 | .556 | 4.0 |
| Golden State | 11 | 9 | .550 | 4.0 |
| Sacramento | 8 | 11 | .421 | 6.5 |

**Southwest**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Memphis | 8 | 6 | .571 | 0.0 |
| San Antonio | 11 | 9 | .550 | 0.0 |
| Houston | 9 | 9 | .500 | 1.0 |
| Dallas | 8 | 12 | .400 | 3.0 |
| New Orleans | 7 | 11 | .389 | 3.0 |

**Northwest**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Utah | 15 | 4 | .789 | 0.0 |
| Denver | 11 | 8 | .579 | 4.0 |
| Portland | 10 | 8 | .556 | 4.5 |
| Oklahoma City | 8 | 10 | .444 | 6.5 |
| Minnesota | 4 | 14 | .222 | 10.5 |

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

# *Warriors could get LaVine in blockbuster deal*

**SAN FRANCISCO**—The Golden State Warriors are in a strong position to engage in a blockbuster deal before the 2021 trade deadline. With the current trade assets that they have, they could pursue another star to help Stephen Curry and Draymond Green carry the team in the 2020-21 NBA season. In recent months, the Warriors have already been linked to several big names that are rumored to be available on the trading block, including Zach LaVine of the Chicago Bulls.

In a recent article, Dan Favale of Bleacher Report suggested a trade that would send LaVine to the Bay Area. In the proposed scenario, the Warriors would be acquiring LaVine from the Bulls by sending them a package that includes Kelly Oubre Jr., Eric Paschall, the Minnesota Timberwolves' 2021 first-round pick and second-round pick, and the right to swap first-round selections in 2022 and 2023.

Trading all those assets in a single transaction would be a tough decision for the Warriors, but Favale believes that it would be worth it if it means acquiring a player of LaVine's caliber.

LaVine would be an incredible addition to the Warriors, giving Curry a new starting backcourt partner while Klay Thompson is recovering from an injury. He may not be a great defender like Thompson, but he's more than capable of filling the huge hole left on the offensive end of the floor. His arrival in Golden State would lessen the burden on Curry's shoulders in terms of scoring and playmaking.

With his ability to play unselfish basketball, he would be a good fit in Coach Steve Kerr's system. If he performs well this season, the Warriors could choose to give LaVine a contract extension and form a three-headed monster with him, Curry, and Thompson in their backcourt.

### Knicks waiting

Meanwhile, the New York Knicks are continuing to show interest in LaVine in the event he is made available.

The Knicks are among many teams monitoring the dynamic between the Bulls and their young star. It's unclear if Chicago is open to listening to offers on LaVine, who will likely command a max contract as a free agent in 2022.

Through the first quarter of the season, LaVine is averaging 27 points, five rebounds, and five assists per game on a career-high 50 percent shooting from the field and 40 percent from 3-point range.

It seems quite apparent the Knicks are hoping to add more playmaking in the backcourt. In addition to being intrigued by the possibility of adding LaVine, New York has reportedly shown interest in Detroit Pistons point guard Derrick Rose.

# QB swap: Lions send Stafford to LA for Goff

AP
Detroit Lions are trading quarterback Matthew Stafford, left, to the Los Angeles Rams for Jared Goff plus draft picks.

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—The Detroit Lions are trading quarterback Matthew Stafford to the Los Angeles Rams in exchange for quarterback Jared Goff, two future first-round picks and a third-round pick, a person with knowledge of the deal tells The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Saturday night because the deal has not been completed. ESPN first reported the swap, which will include the Rams' first-round picks in 2022 and 2023, along with their third-round pick this year.

The blockbuster trade of two starting quarterbacks and former No. 1 overall draft picks will provide a change of scenery for two players who probably need it.

Stafford asked to be traded shortly after the current season ended with the Lions' third straight double-digit losing record. He has been one of the NFL's most prolific passers during his 12-year career spent entirely in Detroit, but has never won a playoff game.

Meanwhile, the Rams' coaching staff and front office have publicly expressed a clear loss of confidence in Goff in recent weeks, even after Los Angeles earned its third playoff berth and posted its fourth straight winning record during his four years under coach Sean McVay. Goff also led the Rams to the Super Bowl after the 2018 season.

Stafford, who turns 33 in February, has two years left on a $135 million, five-year contract.

The Lions had several offers for Stafford, and they all included first-round picks, according to another person with direct knowledge of the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity because those details were not announced.

Stafford was made aware of the teams who wanted to acquire him, and the Rams were one of the franchises he was excited about potentially joining, according to the person.

Stafford is new to the Rams, but he already has friends and a place to stay on the West Coast: Stafford owns an estate in Newport Coast, and he is a childhood friend and former high school teammate of Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw.

The Rams didn't immediately confirm the trade, but their official Twitter account tweeted at Kershaw, asking him: "Have you heard from an old friend today?"

The familiarity of these two franchises' front offices likely helped the difficult deal: New Detroit general manager Brad Holmes just left his job as the Rams' director of college scouting under Snead earlier this month.

Goff is about to start a four-year, $134 million contract with $110 million guaranteed —but just like longtime teammate Todd Gurley, he is leaving the Rams before his huge contract extension even begins.

Goff has been a steady winner since McVay's arrival, but his high propensity for turnovers and lack of improvement over the past two seasons led McVay and general manager Les Snead to speak openly of a future without Goff in recent weeks.

Goff was the most recent first-round pick made by the Rams back in 2016. Snead has now traded away his top pick or moved back in seven consecutive drafts, making bold moves to acquire veteran talent including All-Pro cornerback Jalen Ramsey.

Stafford is leaving downtrodden Detroit and heading to sunny Los Angeles with a chance to take the controls of a team that could be a Super Bowl contender next season.

The Rams went 10-6 and beat NFC West champion Seattle in the playoffs before losing at Green Bay. Stafford also appears to be a clear upgrade at the most important position for McVay, whose reputation as an offensive mastermind has taken several hits over the past two years while Goff and a stagnant skill-position talent pool struggled to execute his schemes effectively.

Goff frequently appeared to be a budding star in his first two seasons under McVay when the Rams ranked first (2017) and second (2018) in the NFL in points scored, but he hasn't built on that success. His 38 turnovers over the past two seasons are the second most in the NFL, and the Rams' inconsistent offense was largely carried this season by its defense.

Goff passed for 3,952 yards and 20 touchdowns—his lowest total since his rookie year—with 13 interceptions and six lost fumbles over 15 games last season. He missed the regular season finale with a broken thumb, but returned to play in both of Los Angeles' postseason games.

During the 2020 finale, Stafford surpassed the 45,000-yard mark in the 165th game of his career — the fewest games an NFL player needed to reach that total. He threw three touchdown passes in that game against Minnesota, raising his career total to 282 .

Like many of Stafford's accomplishments in Detroit, they were marred by a loss as the Lions fell to 5-11 last for their third straight double-digit loss season and his career record dropped to 74-90-1 in the regular season.

Shortly after last season, Stafford asked to be traded and spared from another rebuilding project.

The Lions asked him to wait until they hired a new general manager and coach, but luring Holmes from the Rams to run Detroit's front office and giving New Orleans Saints tight ends coach Brad Campbell a shot to be a head coach again didn't change his mind.

# Serena wins; Djokovic on court in Australia

**ADELAIDE, Australia** (AP)—Serena Williams was preparing to play Naomi Osaka at an Adelaide exhibition tournament on Friday. But first things first—after 14 days in quarantine because of the COVID-19 pandemic regulations in Australia, the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion took her daughter to the zoo.

Williams said she'd been crossing off the 14 days of quarantine on a calendar, having spent the time with her three-year-old daughter Olympia.

"We went to the zoo," Williams said of her first movements outside of quarantine. "I am so glad it's over because to be in a room (for so long) with a three-year-old and being her best friend is definitely difficult, especially after training and working out.

"Honestly, I wouldn't trade anything, spending hours and hours and hours with her was really fun."

The visit must have been a good pre-match tonic for Williams. She beat Osaka 6-2, 2-6, 10-7. Both players showed obvious signs of rustiness, hitting set-up winners out of play or netting relatively easy shots.

"Thanks every one for having us. We honestly haven't played in front of a crowd for over a year, it's been a really long time, so this is really cool," Williams said.

She acknowledged the tough 14-day quarantine restrictions that were in place to allow the Australian Open to take place beginning Feb. 8.

"Thanks for trusting us with your laws, (it) was great," Williams added. "We were so happy just to be here, and now it's worth it."

Earlier Friday, top-ranked Novak Djokovic missed the start of his scheduled exhibition match against emerging Italian talent Jannick Sinner, who was Rafael Nadal's quarantine practice partner. Djokovic got treatment for a blister on his right hand, leaving Sinner to play Filip Krajinovic, but the eight-time Australian Open champion arrived on court at the start of the second set to cheers from the crowd.

Krajinovic won the first set 6-3 and Djokovic the second by the same score to give the Serbian tag-team victory.

"I am sorry that I didn't step on on the court from the beginning, I had to do some treatment with my physio," Djokovic told the crowd in a post-match interview. "I wanted to play, I wanted to get out there."

A television close-up had earlier showed a large blister on the palm of his Djokovic's right hand, where his racket would sit.

## Fans allowed

The Australian Open will be allowed to admit up to 30,000 fans a day, around 50% of the usual attendance, when the Grand Slam gets underway, Victoria state sports minister Martin Pakula said on Saturday.

The limit will be reduced to 25,000 over the last five days of the tournament when there are fewer matches, but Pakula said the announcement would ensure some of the biggest crowds for a sporting event since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It'll mean that over the 14 days, we will have up to 390,000 people here at Melbourne Park and that's about 50% of the average over the last three years," he said.

"It will not be the same as the last few years but it will be the most significant international event with crowds that the world has seen in many, many months."

## Still in quarantine

The Australian Open quarantine facilities are still holding 15 people, including one player and two others who tested positive for COVID-19 earlier in their lockdown.

The vast majority of the more than 1,000 players and their entourages undergoing 14 days of isolation in Melbourne and Adelaide were released by midnight on Saturday.

Spain's Paula Badosa was the only player to have confirmed that she tested positive for COVID-19 in Melbourne, restarting the clock on her mandatory period of isolation.

# Japan PM determined to hold Olympics

**TOKYO** (AP)—Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, despite growing uncertainty as coronavirus cases rise at home, renewed his determination last weekend to host the postponed Tokyo Olympics this summer as a symbol of human victory over the pandemic.

Suga, speaking from Tokyo at a virtual meeting of the World Economic Forum, also called for a transparent investigation by the World Health Organization into the pandemic, saying it is key to learning lessons to prepare for future pandemics. He also promised to expand an initial $130 million contribution to a fund to help developing countries acquire coronavirus vaccines.

"We are holding the Olympics and Paralympics this summer," Suga said. "I am determined to achieve the games as a proof of human victory against the pandemic, a symbol of global solidarity and to give hope and courage around the world."

Olympic officials have repeatedly said the games will be held in July as planned after a one-year postponement, though various scenarios including the holding of events without spectators are being considered.

AP
People walk by a TV monitor showing the Tokyo 2020 Olympics promotion, in Tokyo, Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021.

Suga repeated his resolve to achieve a "safe and secure" Olympics and pledged to get infections under control in Japan as soon as possible.

"We must learn lessons from this pandemic and be prepared for future crises," he said. To do so, "a scientific investigation by WHO must be firmly carried out in a transparent way." He did not say if he was referring to a current visit by a WHO team of experts to Wuhan, China, where the virus was first detected.

At home, Suga has been criticized for delaying virus measures until daily cases surged to new highs in late December. He eventually declared a partial state of emergency in early January, issuing non-binding requests through Feb. 7 for people to avoid crowds or eating out in groups and for restaurants and bars to close early.

New cases in Tokyo have dipped but experts say they have not slowed enough, indicating that the emergency measures could be extended for several more weeks.

## Spectators issues

The organizing committee of the postponed 2020 Olympic Games has ruled out holding the event this year without spectators despite mounting health fears amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Japan has reported more than 384,000 cases of the coronavirus, including more than 5,500 deaths. A state of emergency in Tokyo and three other provinces were declared this month for the second time after a shocking rise in cases in December last year.

The organizing committee, in a statement said that "we are not willing to see the Games without spectators".

"Tokyo 2020 is making efforts to accommodate spectators as much as possible, while implementing thorough measures to prevent infection … the upper limit on the number of spectators will be in line with the limits in force in Japan at the time," it said in the statement.

Earlier this month, a report quoting an unnamed government official said it was "too difficult" to hold the event given the rising cases and new coronavirus strains across the world.

"Nobody can predict the health situation in 206 NOCs and this, naturally and unfortunately, leads to speculations which are hurting the athletes in their preparations to overcome the challenges they face," IOC president Thomas Bach said.

Additionally, there have been warning calls by health experts on what holding the Olympic Games—with or without spectators—during the pandemic could mean for Japan and the world.

Toshio Nakagawa, president of the Japan Medical Association, said "it is not possible to accept [foreigners]" considering the current state of the pandemic.

Haruo Ozaki, chairman of the Tokyo Medical Association, said the Olympic Games should go ahead but without fans altogether.

"I believe we should abandon the idea of holding the event and inviting people from around the world to Tokyo," Ozaki was quoted as saying by The Asahi Shimbun.

A report in the Japan Times said holding the Games without spectators would cost Japan 2.4 trillion yen ($22.9 billion).

"Holding the Tokyo Games behind closed doors would cause a loss of 381.3 billion yen ($3.64 billion) in spending related directly to the games, or 90 percent of the original projection for the events," the report said, quoting estimates by Katsuhiro Miyamoto, an honorary professor at Kansai University.

"Stimulus effects on household consumption expenditures will halve to 280.8 billion yen ($2.7 billion) and corporate marketing activities will be dampened. Economic gains from promotional sporting and cultural events after the games will also be reduced by half to 851.4 billion yen ($8.1 billion)," Miyamoto added. ***(AP/NBC)***

## NMBA

*From Page 20*

will be crucial, especially this year and next, as the association prepares for the islands' hosting of the Pacific Mini Games for the first time.

"It will be a challenge to recruit committed players for the national team," she said.

The NMBA board has identified the Mini Games preparations among its priorities this season and these will include both training members/officials on how to conduct the competition next year and forming the national team.

Tolentino and company have also made initial discussion on how to resume tournaments and other badminton related activities safely amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year, NMBA managed to hold only one competition, the IT&E Badminton Tournament, which was held in February or a little over a month before the local and federal government began enforcing restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus.

As the NMBA board works on holding more competitions this year while still following safety protocols against the COVID-19, the group will also strengthen its Shuttle Time program. The initiative, which Badminton World Federation introduced to its members in 2012, is aimed at making the sport more accessible to children in the 5 to 15 age group by going to schools and to the community. Resource materials and equipment are made available for BWF-affiliated countries to boost Shuttle Time and increase its reach.

In the CNMI, NMBA has reached out to a couple schools since 2019 and could have visited more institutions and hold sessions for other members of the community in 2020 if not for the pandemic. This year, NMBA hopes to bring badminton, including AirBadminton (outdoor version) to more schools and youth groups and will do it in accordance with the safety regulations set by authorities.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Northern Marianas Badminton Association president Merlie Tolentino gestures to members and officials of the NMBA board as they discuss their priorities for this season.

## SCHOOL

*From Page 20*

March and you can see how much they have missed the sport with the way they are playing right now. The competitiveness is evident and that's really good, as we try to revive the community's interest in volleyball while we get ready for the Mini Games," Gross said.

## Equal opportunity

Though he took note of the high level of play in the league, Gross had hoped that more public schools joined this year's competition.

"Unfortunately, because of funding issues, some schools were not able to join us—they need funding to transport the kids to the venue," Gross said.

Kagman High School and Saipan Southern High School missed this year's tournament, while Tinian Junior Senior High School and Rota's Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior Senior High School could not come to Saipan for the weekend games and will just be here when the playoff round is played next month.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mt. Carmel School 2's James San Nicolas bends to receive a serve from Marianas High School during their game in the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic 4v4 Beach Volleyball League last Saturday at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan sand courts.

Marianas High School, Grace Christian Academy, Mt. Carmel School, Saipan International School, and Agape Christian School joined the league and except for the latter, all schools entered multiple teams in both the girls and boys divisions.

"Tinian and Rota are training on their own to get ready for the tournament. How we wish we could bring them on Saipan every weekend. As for the other public schools, we hope we could get them back into the tournament with the help of our community, the teachers, our coaches, and our officials. If we want to turn things over and get sports programs going, we will be needing everyone's help and commitment," Gross said.

"If we can get everyone behind us, we will be able to provide our students equal opportunity to play," he added.

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Sports

QB swap: Lions send Stafford to LA for Goff

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# School league builds up Mini Games

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Marianas High School player waits for the ball to drop for a return to Mt. Carmel School 2.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Grace Christian Academy's Steven Balakrishna hits the ball near the net during their game against Mt. Carmel School 1 in the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic 4v4 Beach Volleyball League last Saturday at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan sand courts.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Organizers of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic 4v4 Beach Volleyball League believe that the ongoing competition will drum up interest in the sport as the CNMI prepares for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games.

Beach volleyball is among the six sports initially included on the program for the rescheduled event.

"We're excited to have this 4x4 tournament. This is a great lead-in to the Mini Games, which we will be hosting next year," PSS Student Support Services Athletic Program director Nick Gross said.

The league, which PSS is holding through the help of the Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association, kicked off the competition for the boys high school division last Saturday at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan sand courts, while the girls played last Jan. 23. The league is the first event PSS is hosting this year and also the first under NMIVA. Ten teams are entered in each division.

"Our players have been without competitions since

See SCHOOL on Page 19

## Nat'l players on NMBA board; group sets priorities

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Officials and members of the Northern Marianas Badminton Association pose for a photo after their election last Friday at the NMBA Gym.

Three national team players made it to the Northern Marianas Badminton Association board as the group held its election of officers last Friday at the NMBA Gym.

Nate Guerrero, Andreau Galvez, and Janelle Pangilinan, who represented the CNMI to the 2019 Pacific Games in Apia, Samoa, will be joining the NMBA board led by president Merlie Tolentino.

Guerrero was elected vice president, while Galvez and Pangilinan were voted directors along with Chris Hilario and Hannah Choi. Completing the NMBA officers list are treasurer Shirley Kim and secretary general Christy Villaflor.

"On behalf of the NMBA board, we would like to thank our members for their vote of confidence. We've a lot of work ahead of us in these challenging times, but we're positive that through the support and commitment of our members and officials, we will be able to continue the development of the sport of badminton in the CNMI," said Tolentino.

Pangilinan, meanwhile, welcomed her new responsibility as part of the NMBA board.

"I'm very honored to be on the NMBA board. Now, I will become more involved with what's happening in NMBA as a whole, not just with the national team," Pangilinan said.

Pangilinan added that NMBA members' support

See NMBA on Page 19